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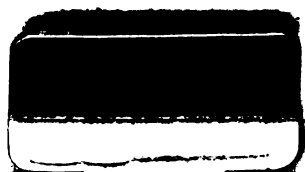
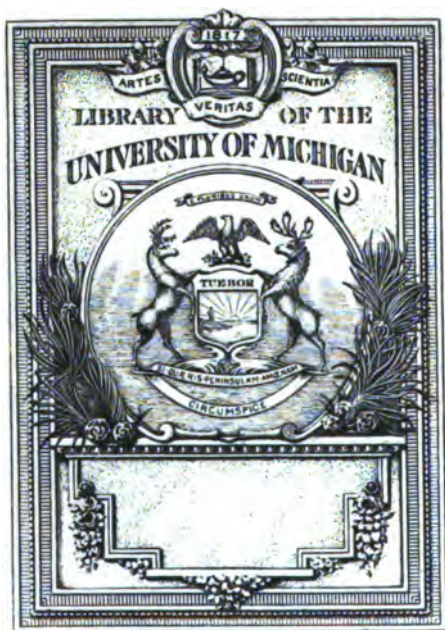
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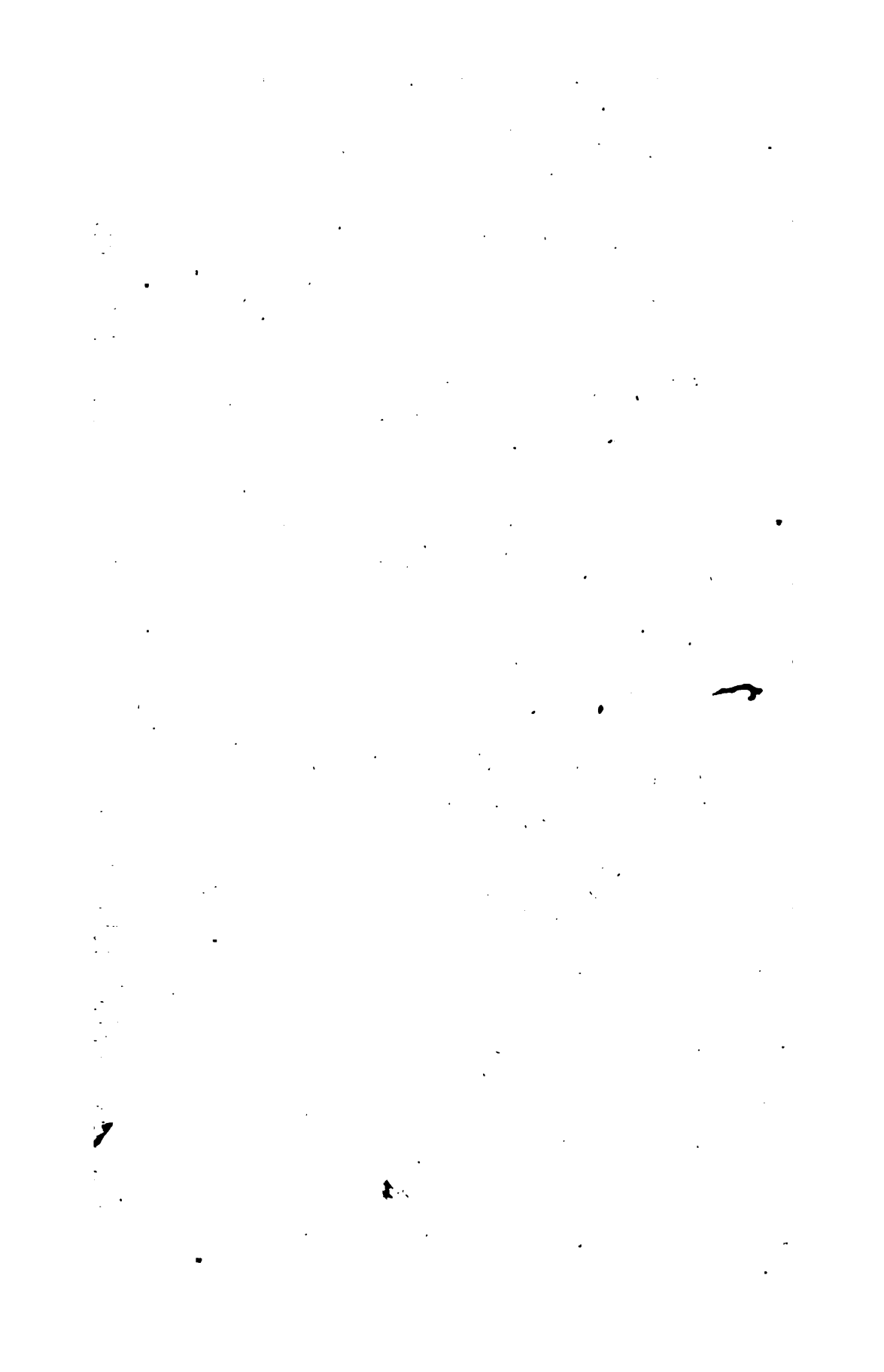
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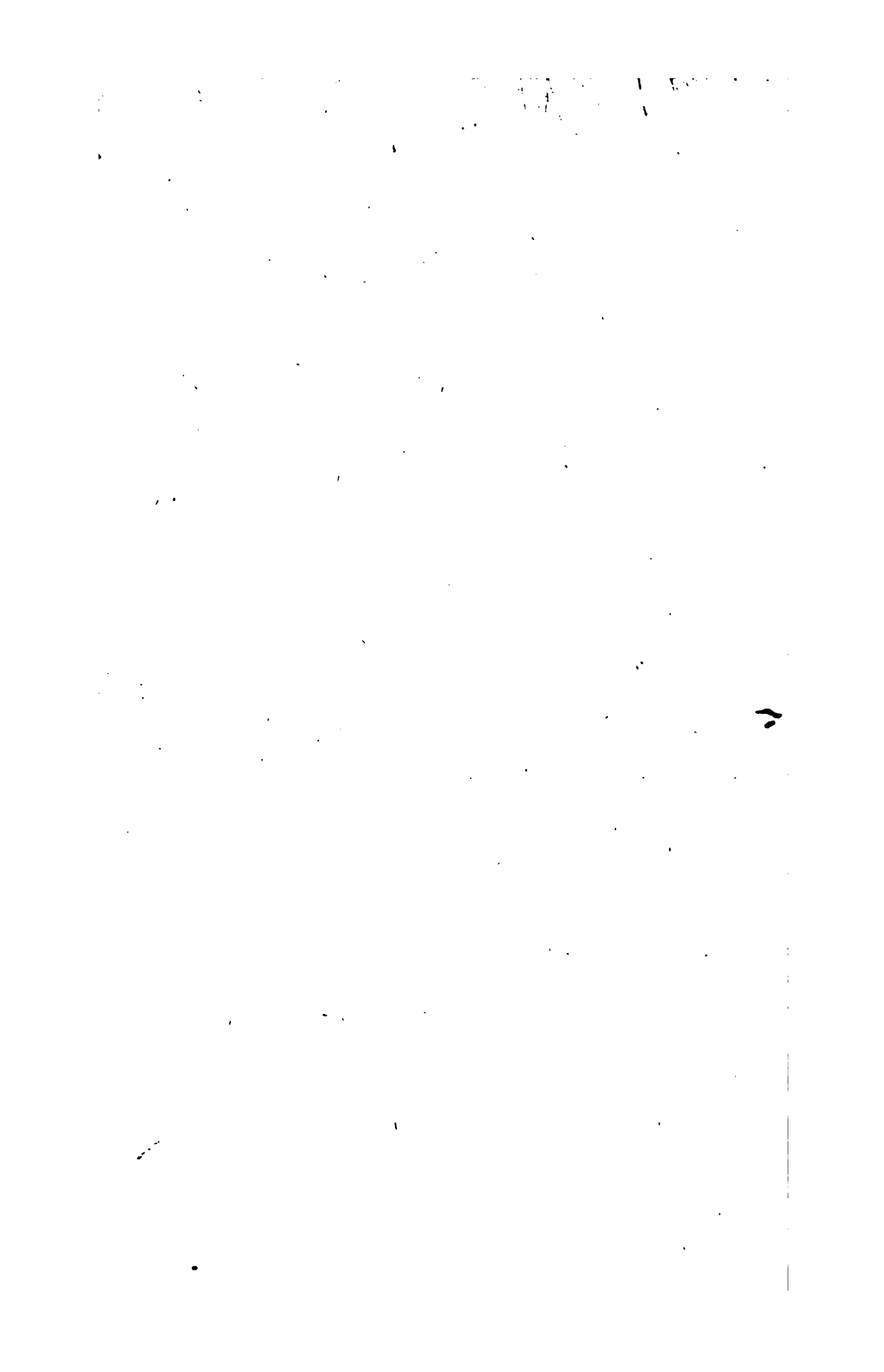


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1780









S K E T C H E S  
OF THE  
Natural, Civil, and Political State  
OF  
SWISSERLAND;

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS  
TO  
WILLIAM MELMOTH, Esq;

FROM

WILLIAM COXE, M. A.

Fellow of King's College, Cambridge; and Chaplain to  
His Grace the Duke of Marlborough.

---

LA HABITE UN PEUPLE SIMPLE, BIENFAISANT, BRAVE,  
ENNEMI DU PASTE, AMI DU TRAVAIL, NE CHER-  
CHANT POINT D'ESCLAVES, ET NE VOULANT POINT  
DES MAÎTRES.

*De Mebegan, Tableau de l'Histoire Moderne.*

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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TO THE  
  
C O U N T E S S  
  
OF

PEMBROKE and MONTGOMERY,  
BARONESS HERBERT, &c. &c. &c.

M A D A M,

**T**HE following letters relating to Swifferland, naturally claim your Ladyship's protection ; for they were written while I had the honour of accompanying Lord HERBERT upon his travels. I feel

A 2                      myself

iv DEDICATION.

myself highly flattered, therefore,  
in having the permission of in-  
scribing them to your Ladyship,  
and of thus publicly acknowledg-  
ing that I am, with great respect,

M A D A M,

Your Ladyship's

Obedient

and obliged

humble servant,

WILLIAM COXE.

Vienna, June 26th,  
1778.

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# LETTERS, &c.

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## LETTER I.

Doneschingen, July 21, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

**I** Am now at Doneschingen, in my way towards Swisserland; a country long celebrated for the peculiarities of its different governments, and for the singular beauties conferred upon it by nature. As both these circumstances cannot fail of being highly interesting to any one, who has the least degree of curiosity; I propose to myself great satisfaction in this tour: not without some regret, however, that our time for this expedition is extremely limited, and that we shall not be

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able



able to visit as much as I could wish of so delightful a country. But as it is always one's interest, not so much to regret what we cannot have, as to make the most of what is in our power ; I shall endeavour to gain all the information, which the shortness of the time will admit : and, if it will not be trespassing upon your patience, I propose to trouble you with some account of my tour ; writing however, only when it may be convenient to me, and without promising that you will find me a very punctual correspondent. I am persuaded, that I shall travel with much greater profit to myself, when I am thus to inform you of all that I have seen ; as the reflection that my observations are to be communicated to you, will be one means of rendering me more attentive and accurate in forming them.

We quitted Strasbourg yesterday, and crossed the Rhine to Kehl, formerly an important fortress belonging to Strasbourg when an imperial city. It was also strongly fortified by the French, who took possession of it in 1648 ; but it was ceded to  
the

the Empire at the peace of Ryſwic: the Emperor conſigned it over to the houſe of Baden, reſerving, however, to himſelf the right of having a garrifon therein. Since that period, it has been twice beſieged by the French: and as during the laſt ſiege, in 1733, the works were conſiderably damaged, the imperial garrifon has been withdrawn. At preſent, there are only the ruins of the ancient fortifications; and by way of garrifon, a few invalids belonging to the Margrave of Baden. From thence we proceeded to Offenbourg, a ſmall imperial town; and ſoon after, entered the beautiful valley of Kinfing; paſſed through Gengenbach, another ſmall imperial town, finely ſituated; and went up the valley along the courſe of the river Kinfing; riſing gradually for ſeveral leagues together, until we found ourſelves in the miſt of the Black Foreſt. As we aſcended, the country became more wild and romantic, and the river more rapid; on each hand mountains, whoſe ſides were finely cultivated, and whoſe tops were richly covered with a continual foreſt. Several ſmall ſtreams of the cleareſt water

rolled down the sides of the mountains; forming numberless little cascades in their passage; and uniting, fell into the Kinsing. The views were so exceedingly diversified; the villages so delightfully situated; and the cottages so exceedingly picturesque, that we almost imagined we had anticipated the romantic beauties of Switzerland.

Doneschingen is the principal residence of the prince of Furstenberg: in the courtyard of his palace, the Danube takes its rise. I am this moment returned from visiting the spot; the description of which may be comprised in a few words. Some small springs rising from the ground, form a basin of clear water, of about thirty foot square: from this pool issues the Danube, being at first nothing more than a little brook. And though the two small rivers of Bribach and Brège, uniting below the town, are far more considerable than this stream, which flows into them soon after their junction; yet it is the latter that alone has the honour of being called the source of the Danube, and gives name to the other two. After we had  
gone

gone through the ceremony of striding across the stream, in order to say, that we had *stepped* over the Danube, we soon satisfied our curiosity; the object itself being in no respect extraordinary, but deriving its principal recommendation from being one of the sources of so considerable a river. Indeed, it was this circumstance alone that induced us to enter Switzerland by the way of Suabia.

I am, dear Sir,

very affectionately yours,

WILLIAM COXE,

## L E T T E R II.

Schaffhausen, July 22.

**I** HAVE great pleasure in breathing the air of liberty: every person here has apparently the mien of content and satisfaction. The cleanliness of the houses, and of the people, is peculiarly striking; and I can trace in all their manners, behaviour, and dress, some strong outlines, which distinguish this happy people from

the neighbouring nations. Perhaps it may be prejudice and unreasonable partiality ; but I am the more pleased, because their first appearance very much reminds me of my own countrymen, and I could almost think, for a moment, that I am in England.

Schaffhausen is a neat and tolerably well-built town, situated upon the northern shore of the Rhine. It is the capital of the canton of the same name, and owes its origin to the interruption of the navigation of that river by the cataract at Lauffen : huts were at first constructed here for the convenience of unloading the merchandize from the boats ; and these huts, by degrees, encreased to a large town. Schaffhausen was formerly an imperial city, and was governed by an aristocracy ; it preserved its liberties, which were attacked by the Dukes of Austria, by entering into an alliance with several other imperial towns, and with the Swiss cantons. In 1501, it was admitted a member of the Helvetic confederacy ; being the twelfth canton in rank. Of all the cantons, it is the least in size, being only

only five leagues in length and three in breadth: its population is supposed to amount to thirty thousand souls; of which, the capital contains about six thousand.

The whole number of citizens or burgeses (in whom the supreme power ultimately resides) is, I am informed, about sixteen hundred. They are divided into twelve tribes: and from these are elected eighty-five members, who form the sovereign council, consisting of a great and little council. To these two councils combined, the administration of affairs is committed: the senate, or little council of twenty-five, being entrusted with the executive power; and the great council, comprising the senate, finally deciding all appeals, and regulating the more important concerns of government.

The revenues of the state arise, partly from the tythes, and other articles of the like nature; but principally from the duties laid upon the merchandise, which passes from Germany: and I am informed, that these customs are nearly sufficient to defray all the public expences. These, indeed, are not very considerable, as will

appear from the salary of the burgomaster, or chief of the republic; which barely amounts to £.150 *per ann.* The reformation was introduced here in 1529: the clergy are paid by the state, but their income is literally not sufficient for their maintenance; the best living being only about £.100, and the worst £.40 *per ann.* The professors of literature also, who are taken from the clergy, are paid likewise by government; and a public school is supported at the expence of the same. Sumptuary laws are in force here, as well as in most parts of Swisserland; and no dancing is allowed, except upon particular occasions: silk, lace, and several other articles of luxury, are prohibited; even the ladies head-dresses are regulated. How would such Gothic ordinances be received in England? they would serve at least to lower the price of feathers. But what is of still greater importance, all games of hazard are strictly prohibited; and in other games the party who loses above six florins (about nine shillings of our money) incurs a considerable fine. An excellent regulation! and I was informed, that

That these laws are not, like ours of the same kind, mere cyphers, but are well observed. The principal article of exportation is wine; of which they make a large quantity, the country abounding in vineyards; and as the canton furnishes but little corn, they procure it from Suabia in exchange for their wine. In the town there are some, but not very considerable, manufactures of linen, cotton, and silk: their commerce, however, is very flourishing.

It will perhaps give you some idea of the security of the Swiss cantons, when I tell you, that Schaffhausen, although a frontier town, has no garrison; and that the fortifications are but slight. The citizens mount guard by turns; and the people of the canton being divided into regular companies of militia, which are exercised yearly, are always ready and prepared to take up arms in defence of their country. This canton has some troops in the services of France, Sardinia, and Holland; the only foreign services into which the subjects of the Protestant cantons enlist.

Before



Before I take my leave of this city, I must not omit mentioning the famous bridge over the Rhine; justly admired for the beauty and singularity of its architecture. The river is extremely rapid, and had already destroyed several bridges of stone, built upon arches of the strongest construction; when a carpenter of Appenzel undertook to throw a wooden one, of a single arch, across the river, which is near three hundred feet wide. The magistrates, however, insisted, that it should consist of two arches, and that he should make use for that purpose of the middle pier of the old bridge, which remained entire. Accordingly, the architect was obliged to obey; but he has contrived it in such a manner, that the bridge is not at all supported by the middle pier: and it would certainly have been equally safe, and considerably more beautiful, had it consisted solely of one arch. But how shall I attempt to give you an idea of it? I, who am totally unskilled in architecture, and who have not the least knowledge of drawing. Take however the following description, and excuse its inaccuracy:

It is a wooden bridge, of which the sides and top are covered, and the road over it is almost perfectly level : it is what the Germans call a *hængewerk*, or hanging bridge ; the road not being carried, as usual, over the top of the arch ; but, if I may use the expression, is let down into the middle of it, and there suspended. The middle pier is not absolutely in a right line with the side ones, that rest upon the shore ; as it forms with them a very obtuse angle pointing down the stream, being eight foot out of the linear direction. The distance of this middle pier from the shore that lies towards the town, is one hundred and seventy-one feet, and from the other side, one hundred and ninety-three ; in all, three hundred and sixty-four feet ; making in appearance two arches of a surprising width, and forming the most beautiful perspective imaginable when viewed at some distance. A man of the slightest weight walking upon it, feels it tremble under him ; yet waggons heavily laden pass over it without danger : and although in the latter instance, the bridge seems

seems almost to crack with the pressure, it does not appear to have ever suffered the least damage. It has been compared, and very justly, to a tight rope, which trembles when it is struck, but still preserves its firm and equal tension. I went under this bridge, close to the middle pier, in order to examine its mechanism ; and though in no respect a mechanic, I could not help being struck with the elegant simplicity of the architecture ; I was not capable of determining whether it rests upon the middle pier, but most judges agree that it does not.

When one observes the greatness of the plan, and the boldness of the construction, one is astonished that the architect was a common carpenter, without the least tincture of literature, totally ignorant of mathematics, and not at all versed in the theory of mechanics. The name of this extraordinary man was Ulric Grubenman, an obscure drunken fellow of Tuffen, a small village in the canton of Appenzel. Possessed of uncommon natural abilities, and a surprising turn for the practical part of mechanics, he raised himself to  
great

great eminence in his profession ; and may justly be considered as one of the most ingenious architects of the present century. This bridge was finished in less than three years, and cost ninety thousand florins\*.

This

\* About £.8000 sterling. Mr. Andrez, in his Letters upon Swisserland, has given two engravings of this bridge, to which he has added a very accurate description of its mechanical construction, communicated to him by Mr. Jetzler of Schaffhausen. In this description he considers it as consisting of two arches, and represents the bridge as resting upon the middle pier ; but I have been assured by several persons of very respectable authority, who saw it soon after it was built, that the bridge, when it was first constructed, did not even touch the pier in question ; and since that time, that there has been a wedge driven in by order of the magistrates. As a proof, if indeed any such proof be wanted, that the architect could have succeeded in constructing the bridge without the aid of the middle pier ; his brother, John Grubenman, no less eminent than the other, built about the same time, and in the same stile of architecture, a bridge over the Rhine at Reichenau, in the Grisons, which is two hundred and forty feet long, and consists but of one arch. And what would have been still more extraordinary, Ulric Grubenman had agreed to throw a bridge of a single arch, and of the same construction, over the river Derry in Ireland. The river is

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This morning we set out on horseback, in order to see the fall of the Rhine at Lauffen, about a league from this place. Our road lay over the hills which form the banks of the Rhine; from whence we had some fine views of the town and castle of Schaffhausen: the environs are picturesque and agreeable; the river beautifully winding through the vale. Upon our arrival at Lauffen, a small village in the canton of Zurich, we dismounted; and advancing to the edge of the precipice which overhangs the Rhine, we looked down perpendicularly upon the cataract, and saw the river tumbling over the sides of the rock with amazing violence and precipitation. From hence we descended till we were somewhat below the upper bed of the river, and stood close to the fall; so that I could almost have touched it with my hand. A scaffolding is erected

six hundred feet wide, which, by means of abutments, was to have been reduced to four hundred; it was to have cost £. 20,000: but the plan was not carried into execution for want of proper encouragement.

Vid. *Briefe aus der Schweiz nach Hannover geschrieben*, printed at Zurich, 1776.

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in the very spray of this tremendous cataract, and upon the most sublime point of view :—the sea of foam tumbling down—the continual cloud of spray scattered around at a great distance, and to a considerable height—in short, the magnificence of the whole scenery far surpassed my most sanguine expectations, and exceeds all description. Within about an hundred feet, as it appeared to be, of the scaffolding, there are two rocks in the middle of the fall, that prevent one from seeing its whole breadth from this point : the nearest of these was perforated by the continual action of the river ; and the water forced itself through in an oblique direction, with inexpressible fury, and an hollow sound. After having continued some time, contemplating in silent admiration the awful sublimity of this wonderful landscape, we descended ; and below the fall we crossed the river, which was exceedingly agitated.

Hitherto I had only viewed the cataract sideways ; but here it opened by degrees, and displayed another picture, which I enjoyed at my leisure, as I sat myself down upon

upon the opposite bank. The most striking objects were, on the side we came from, a castle, erected upon the very edge of the precipice, and projecting over the river; near it, a church and some cottages; on the side where I was sitting, a clump of cottages close to the fall; in the back ground, rising hills, planted with vines, or tufted with hanging woods; a beautiful little hamlet upon the summit, skirted with trees; the great body of water, that seemed as it were to rush out from the bottom of these hills; the two rocks above mentioned boldly advancing their heads in the midst of the fall, and in the very point of its steepest descent, their tops covered with shrubs, and dividing the cataract into three principal branches. The colour of the Rhine is extremely beautiful, being of a clear sea-green; and I could not but remark the fine effect of the tints, when blended with the white foam in its descent. There is a pleasing view from an iron foundery close to the river, which is dammed up, in order to prevent its carrying away the works and neighbouring cottages: by means of  
this

this dam a small portion of the river, in its fall, enters a trough, turns a mill, and forms a beautiful little silver current, gliding down the bare rock, and detached from the main cataract. Below the fall the river widens considerably into a more ample basin; at the fall, the breadth, as well as I could judge by my eye, seemed to be about two hundred and fifty feet. As to its perpendicular height, travellers differ: those who are given to exaggeration reckon it an hundred feet high; but I should imagine about fifty feet will be nearer the truth. I stood for some time upon the brink of the cataract; beheld in admiration, and listened in silence; then crossed the river, re-mounted my horse, and returned to Schaffhausen.

Some writers have asserted that the river precipitates itself in one sheet of water; and, as I before observed, from a perpendicular height of an hundred feet. In former ages this account was probably agreeable to fact; as it is imagined, that the space between the two banks was once a level rock, and considerably higher; that the river has insensibly worn away, and

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undermined



undermined those parts, on which it broke along with the utmost violence: for, within the memory of several of the inhabitants of this town, a large rock has given way, that has greatly altered the view. Indeed I am convinced that the perpendicular height of the fall becomes less and less every year, by the continual friction of so large and rapid a body of water; and have no doubt but that the two rocks, which now rise in the midst of the river, will in time be undermined and carried away. The river, for some way before the fall, even near the bridge, dashes upon a rocky bottom, and renders the navigation impossible for any kind of vessel. A few weeks ago a countryman of ours tried an experiment with a small boat, which he contrived to have gently pushed to the edge of the cataract: it shot down entire to the bottom of the fall, was out of sight for a few moments, and then rose up, dashed into a thousand splinters.

I am, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R III.

Constance, July 24:

**Y**ESTERDAY morning we quitted Schaffhausen, and crossed the Rhine at Dieffenhoffen, a small town in Thurgovy; a country dependent upon the eight antient cantons: from thence to Stein the road lay by the side of that river. Stein is an independent town under the protection of Zurich, but governed by its own laws and magistrates. At this place we took a boat to carry us to Constance. A little above the town of Stein the river widens considerably, and forms the inferior lake of Constance, or the Zeller See, which is divided into two branches: from Stein to Constance is about sixteen miles, and from the latter to Zell, its greatest breadth, about ten.

A fine breeze soon carried us to the island of Reichenau, which is under the sovereignty of the thirteen cantons: it is about three miles long, and one broad; contains about sixteen hundred inhabitants,

tants, all Catholics ; three parishes ; one village ; and a rich abbey of Benedictines, of which the bishop of Constance is abbot. The superior was exceedingly civil, and shewed us all the relics and curiosities of the convent : among the latter, was a carious tooth of Charles Le Gros. That monarch, who was emperor and king of France, and who possessed dominions as extensive as those of Charlemagne, lived to want the common necessities of life, and to depend for his subsistence upon the charity of an archbishop of Mentz. He was publicly deposed in 887, at a meeting of the principal French, German, and Italian barons, whom he himself had summoned : after having languished a year, in extreme want and misery, he died, and was buried in this convent. The next remarkable curiosity, was an emerald, as it is called, of an extraordinary size, which, according to the annals of the convent, was a present from Charlemagne. Take its dimensions, and then judge whether it can be an emerald : it has four unequal sides ; the longest of which is near two feet, and the broadest about nine inches ;  
it

it is one inch thick, and weighs about twenty-nine pounds. The superior valued it at fifty thousand florins; but if it be, as I conjecture, nothing more than a transparent green fluor-spathus, its value will be reduced to a few florins. Upon our return to the inn, where we dined, we found a present from the superior, which we valued more than all the relics and curiosities of his convent; two bottles of excellent wine, the growth of the island; which indeed is almost one continued vineyard.

In the evening we arrived at Constance: its situation upon the Rhine, between the two lakes, is most delightful. I was much struck with the solitary appearance of a town once so flourishing in commerce, and formerly so celebrated in the annals of history. There was a dead stillness throughout; grass growing in the principal streets; in a word, it wears the melancholy aspect of being almost totally deserted: and upon enquiry, I found there were scarcely three thousand inhabitants. This city has met with a sad reverse of fortune: it was formerly in alliance with

Straßbourg, Zurich, Basil, &c.; and, supported by the assistance of Zurich and Berne, had driven out the bishop, and embraced the reformation. But the Protestant cantons being worsted in 1351; and the league of Smalcade, of which Constance was a member, being defeated by Charles V. the town was obliged to submit to the emperor, and to re-admit the Catholic religion. From this period it lost its independence; and being neglected by the house of Austria, it fell by degrees into its present almost annihilated state; exhibiting to some of the neighbouring Swiss cantons, an instructive contrast, which cannot but the more sensibly endear to them their own invaluable happiness, in the commerce and liberties they enjoy.

We paid a visit to the chamber where the council of Constance was held in 1415, and had the honour of sitting in the two chairs, in which sat pope John XXIII \*. and the emperor Sigismund; if any honour can be derived from a turbulent ec-

\* He was deposed in this council.

clesiastic,

ecclesiastic, and a perjured sovereign. It was by a sentence of this council, that the celebrated reformer John Huss (having embraced the doctrines of our Wickliffe, and trusting to the safeguard of the emperor, who violated his word) was burnt as a heretic. They shew the house in which he was seized, and upon which his head, carved in stone, but now almost defaced, is fixed; with an inscription under it in German. Jerome of Prague, his disciple, had the weakness to recant before the same council; but this weakness was amply compensated by the greatness of soul with which he again retracted this recantation, and by the calm and intrepid magnanimity which he shewed in his last moments at the stake. From the top of the cathedral we had a superb view of the town, (which is now scarcely a third of its antient extent) and of the two lakes; with the rugged Alps of Tyrol and Appenzel, their tops covered with perpetual snow.

I am just returned from a pleasant expedition to the small island of Meinau, in a bay of the superior lake: this island,

about a mile in circumference, belongs to the knights of the Teutonic order. The bailiff shewed us the house of the commander, which is prettily situated; and has a fine prospect of the lake, but contains nothing remarkable. The garden might have been well laid out by a judicious hand at a very small expence: but the man who planned it, took it into his head to hide the view of the lake; which, after much cost, he has at length unhappily effected by means of high and cut hedges! the honest gardener did not forget to expatiate on the merit of this *curious* contrivance. The cellars of this castle are well stocked with wine; an article from whence the chief revenue of the commandery arises. Our good friend the bailiff was very free in offering it to us; and we, not to appear insensible of his civility, were constrained to taste of several different sorts, which he presented, one after the other, always praising the last as the oldest and the most exquisite. The wine was indeed excellent, the glasses large, and a most formidable row of enormous casks still remained untasted; so that,

after

after having duly extolled several specimens, we found it expedient to decline the farther solicitations of our generous host: for, had we gone through the whole ceremony, we should most probably have taken up our abode in the castle for this night.

July 25.

We set sail about two hours ago from Constance. This superior lake, or, as it is sometimes called, the Bodén See, is about fifteen leagues in length and six in its greatest breadth: it is one of the great boundaries that separate Swisserland from Germany. The borders on each side consist of gently rising hills; on the left hand Suabia, and on the right Thurgovy, with a variety of towns, villages, and monasteries, scattered about: the form of the lake inclines to an oval, and the water is of a greenish hue. I am now writing aboard the vessel, and have been for some time in vain attempting to distinguish (what some travellers have affirmed to be discernable) the waters of the Rhine from those of the lake: though indeed I was before almost convinced of the impossibility



lity. For, the river in its course from the superior lake, being exactly of the same beautiful greenish colour as the inferior lake into which it flows; it is evident that the one can never be distinguished from the other. Probably, upon its first entrance into the superior lake it is troubled, and consequently, for some way, its current may easily be traced: but it purifies by degrees, and becomes an indistinct part of the great body of water.

This lake is considerably deeper in summer than in winter; owing to the first meltings of the snow from the neighbouring mountains; it abounds in fish of all sorts, and contains two species, which are peculiar to itself, and are taken only three months in the year. Yesterday evening in our expedition to Meinau, there was scarcely a breeze stirring, and the lake was as smooth as chrystal: a brisk gale has now raised a fine curl upon the surface; and the surrounding landscape forms an assemblage of the most beautiful objects imaginable. In short, the several views which present themselves are so truly enchanting, that I regret every moment that

my eyes are called off from the delightful scene around me. You will not wonder therefore, if I am tempted to bid you adieu somewhat abruptly.

Yours, &c.

#### L E T T E R   I V .

July 26.

**I** WRITE to you from the midst of the Alps, under the shade of a grove of beeches, while a clear stream of water, flowing at my feet, forms a natural cascade down the rock. I have just made a hearty meal upon some bread and cheese ; which I found to be a most delicious repast, after having well earned it, by walking near six miles over the mountains of Appenzel.

We this day quitted St. Gallen, where being asked a most extravagant price for the hire of six horses, by those who thought we must necessarily take them upon their own terms, we determined not to submit to the imposition ; but to walk to Appenzel, and send our baggage by the horse-road ; however, (not to ascribe the whole merit  
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of this heroic resolution altogether to economy) I must tell you at the same time, that we were informed beforehand, that the foot-way was by much the most agreeable. Nor do I in the least repent of having made the experiment: for, the beauty and singularity of the road through which we passed has more than compensated for any fatigue of the journey. The country is singularly wild and romantic; consisting of a continued series of vallies, with ranges of mountains, whose tops are crowned with the most luxuriant pastures I ever beheld. I could not have conceived it possible, without having been an eye-witness, that any district within the same compass could have exhibited so numerous a population; the hills and vales being strewed thick with hamlets, scattered at a small distance from each other; and they are exactly placed too in the very spots which a man of taste would have fixed upon. The picturesque mountains, the forests, the currents which we passed, over bridges resembling those I have seen in some of the best landscapes, added to the beauty of the scenes, and diversified  
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with the most pleasing objects every step we took. After having reposed for a short time in this delightful spot, I cannot employ myself more to my satisfaction than by giving you a continuation of my journal.

I took my leave of you, in my last, upon the lake of Constance : we landed at Roshach, a small town in the dominions of the abbot of St. Gallen, delightfully situated in the midst of a bay at the edge of the lake, and at the bottom of a rising hill, richly covered with wood and pasturages. From Roshach we went to St. Gallen, the whole territory whereof does not exceed a league and an half in circumference : the town contains seven thousand inhabitants ; its environs two. Every thing here was alive ; all wore the appearance of industry and activity ; exhibiting a striking opposition to Constance, which we had just quitted.

The abbot and town of St. Gallen are both allies of the Swiss cantons, and each have the peculiar privilege of sending deputies to the general diet : I call it *peculiar*, because none of the other allies, (except  
 Bienne

Bienne and Mulhausen) enjoy the same. The abbot of St. Gallen is titular prince of the Empire, and is chosen by seventy-two Dominican monks, belonging to the abbey, out of their number. He formerly possessed the sovereignty of the town ; but the inhabitants shook off his authority, and became independent : and although, since that period, various disputes have arisen between the two rival parties ; they have been at different times compromised by the interposition of the Swiss cantons. The town is entirely Protestant, and its government aristo-democratical : the subjects of the abbot (whose territory is very extensive, and whose power absolute) are mostly Catholics. It is remarkable, that the abbey in which the prince resides, is situated close to the town, and in the midst of its territory ; as that of the latter is also entirely surrounded by the possessions of the former.

The town owes its flourishing state to the uncommon industry of the inhabitants, and to a very extensive commerce, arising chiefly from its manufactures of linen, muslin, and embroidery. In a place  
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so entirely commercial, I was astonished to find the arts and sciences cultivated, and literature in the highest esteem. In the library there are thirteen volumes in folio, containing manuscript letters to and from several of the first German and Swiss reformers. Luther ends a letter to Melancthon as follows :

*Pestis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, Papa.*

These letters would probably throw a new light on the history of the reformation.

The library belonging to the abbey is very numerous and well arranged ; and, among a number of monkish manuscripts, contains several classic ones, which engaged my chief attention. In this library, Petronius Arbiter, Silius Italicus, and Valerius Flaccus were found in 1413, and copies dispersed : it was formerly very rich in curious manuscripts ; but several were borrowed during the council of Constance, by the cardinals and bishops, who never returned them.

The transition from the abbot of St. Gallen to the canton of Appenzel will not appear

pear abrupt, as the latter once belonged to the former : the inhabitants, however, being loaded with exorbitant and oppressive taxes, revolted in 1400, and maintained their independence with the desperate courage of a spirited people, who fight for their liberties. In 1452 they entered into a perpetual alliance with some of the neighbouring Swiss republics ; and in 1513 were admitted into the Helvetic confederacy : they hold the last rank among the thirteen cantons.

Before the reformation, the whole canton was under one government ; but since that period, part of the inhabitants having embraced the Protestant religion, and the other part continuing Catholics, violent disputes were kindled between them ; which, after much contest, were at length compromised. By an agreement in 1597, the canton was divided into two portions ; Rhodes Exterior, and Rhodes Interior : it was stipulated, that the former should be appropriated to the residence of the Protestants, and the latter to that of the Catholics. Accordingly the two parties finally separated, and formed two republics ;

lies ; their government, police, finances, &c. being totally independent of each other. Each district sends a deputy to the general diet : the whole canton, however, has but one vote, and loses its suffrage if the two parties are not unanimous. In both divisions the sovereign power is vested in the people at large ; every male, who is past sixteen, having a vote in their general assembly, held yearly for the creation of their magistrates and the purposes of legislation : and each voter is obliged to appear armed on that particular occasion. The Landamman is the first magistrate : in each district there are two, who administer the office alternately, and are confirmed yearly. They have each a permanent council, in which all jurisdiction in civil and criminal causes is lodged, together with the care of the police, the management of the finances, and the general administration of affairs. The Landamman regent presides ; and the other, during the year in which he is out of office, is banneret or chief of the militia.

The Rhodes Exterior is much larger, and more peopled in proportion, than the

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Interior ;



Interior; and the Protestants are in general more commercial and industrious than the Catholics.—The former are supposed to amount to thirty-seven thousand; the latter to twelve thousand: a considerable number, in a small canton of about sixty square leagues, entirely mountainous, and of which a great part consists of barren and inaccessible rocks. But the industry of the inhabitants amply compensates for any disadvantages of soil: for, the people are frugal and laborious, their property is secured, and they are exempted from all burdensome and arbitrary taxes. These circumstances, joined to their right of partaking of the legislation, and of electing their magistrates, inspire them with such animated sentiments of their own importance and independence, as excite the most active and vigorous industry: and those necessities to which this industry is not sufficient, are abundantly supplied by their neighbours, in exchange for their manufactures and other articles of their domestic commerce. The chief part of the habitable country consists in rich pastures; and of course their principal

pal exports are cattle and hides, together with cheese and butter: their manufactures are linen and thread; of both which they make a considerable quantity, and for the support of which the canton furnishes flax in great abundance.

There are no inclosed towns in this canton; it contains only two or three open burghs, as they are called, (of which Appenzel is the largest in the Catholic, and Herisau in the Protestant, district) together with a few small villages: but indeed the whole country, except amongst the barren rocks, is almost a continued village, thickly covered as it is with excellent cottages, which have the most beautiful effect imaginable. Each cottage has its little territory, consisting generally of a field or two of fine pasture ground, and frequently skirted with trees: of the latter there is great plenty, the mountains being for the most part beautifully wooded; and the canton is supplied with water in such exuberance, that we could hardly walk two hundred paces without seeing a spring issuing from the ground, or perhaps a torrent rushing down the sides of a rock.

In our way to Appenzel, we entered several of their houses, which are all built of wood; neatness and convenience being the principal object of the owners: such a remarkable cleanliness prevailed throughout, as afforded me a most striking proof of the general attention this people pay to that essential article. A continued chain of these cultivated mountains, richly cloathed with wood, and studded all over with hamlets, (which one would almost imagine had been placed by the genius of taste in the very spots where they would have the most striking effect) exhibits a landscape inexpressibly pleasing: it seemed as if they belonged to so many independent clans; independent, but social, and uniting for the great purposes of legislation, and for the general preservation of their liberties. The Protestant division contains about ten thousand men capable of bearing arms; and the Catholic about three thousand.

Among the chief part of the inhabitants, the original simplicity of the pastoral life is still preserved; and I saw several venerable figures with long beards, that resembled the old patriarchs. I am  
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much mortified that I cannot speak German, which is their language; as that natural frankness, and particular tone of equality, which arise from a consciousness of their own independence, could not fail of affording me very interesting conversations. As to the state of literature, my stay here has been so short, that I cannot form any accurate idea of it; I have only been informed in general, that learning has made its way over these mountains; and that there are several men of letters in this canton, who are an honour to themselves, and an ornament to their country.

In our way to this place we passed through Tuffen, the birth-place of Ulric Grubenman, whom I mentioned in a former letter \*: he has been dead some years: but his abilities and his skill in practical architecture are, if I may use the expression, hereditary in his family. We enquired for one of the same name, who was either his brother or his nephew, whom we found at the alehouse; his usual place of resort when he has no

\* See p. 12.

particular employment. He is a heavy, coarse-looking man, dressed like a common peasant; has a quick and penetrating eye, and a surprising readiness of conversation. We told him that we were Englishmen, who were making the tour of Swisserland; and, as we wished to view every thing remarkable in the country, we could not pass through Tuffen without desiring to see a man who was so much celebrated for his skill in architecture. He struck his breast, and replied in German, "Here you see but a boor." Upon our talking with him about the bridge of Schaffhausen, in the building of which he was employed, he assured us, that it does not rest upon the middle pier, but is in effect a single arch. Near Appenzel we observed an old man with venerable white hair hanging down over his shoulders, who looked like one of our substantial farmers: he enquired with a tone of authority, but with perfect civility, who we were; and upon our asking the same question respecting himself, of our guide, we were informed, that he was the *Landamman*, or chief of the republic.

Happy people, the nature of whose country, and the constitution of whose government both equally oppose the strongest barriers against the baneful introduction of luxury !

Yours, &c.

Appenzel, July 27.

## L E T T E R V.

Salets, July 27.

**W**E are this moment arrived at this place; where we propose passing the night: while supper is preparing, I will continue my journal. We could procure but three horses at Appenzel, and as one of them was appropriated to the baggage, I preferred walking: accordingly I set out by myself some time before the cavalcade. After having walked a league in the canton, through the same kind of country mentioned in my last (a continued range of mountains, enriched with beautiful meadows, and dotted thick with cottages) I arrived at its boundary; when the scene suddenly changed into a wild forest,

forest, consisting chiefly of pines, without the least appearance of any habitation. The road is very singular. It is in most parts not more than three feet broad; and is either paved with large uneven pieces of rock, or formed of thick stakes laid closely together; but as the ground is in many parts softer than in others, these stakes of course in some places sink deeper, and by this means form an almost invariable succession of uneven steps. The mountain by which we descended into the plain, is very steep; which, added to the unevenness of the stakes, makes the ascent and descent exceedingly difficult for horses. Those who are pleased with an uniform view, may continue in the plain; while others, who delight in the grand and the sublime, and are struck with the wantonness of wild, uncultivated nature, will prefer this road to the smoothest turnpike in Great Britain.

I walked slowly on, without envying my companions on horseback: for I could sit down upon an inviting spot, climb to the edge of a precipice, or trace a torrent by its fount. I descended at length into the

the Rheintal, of valley of the Rhine; the mountains of Tyrol, which yielded neither in height or in cragginess to those of Appenzel, rising before me. And here I found a remarkable difference: for although the ascending and descending was a work of some labour; yet the variety of the scenes had given me spirits; and I was not sensible of the least fatigue. But in the plain, notwithstanding the scenery was still beautiful and picturesque, I saw at once the whole way stretching before me; and had no room for fresh expectations: I was not therefore sorry when I arrived at Oberried, after a walk of about twelve miles, my coat slung upon my shoulder like a peripatetic by profession. Here we were lucky enough to procure a narrow open cart; in which, the roads being rough and stony, you will readily believe we were not much at our ease.

The evening however being fine, and the moon exceedingly bright, our journey was not altogether unpleasant; as it led us through a delightful country abounding in vines, in fruit-trees, in flax, and excellent pasturages.

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This Rheintal is a bailiage belonging to Appenzel and the eight antient cantons, which alternately appoint a bailiff. The people are industrious, and manufacture a considerable quantity of linen, cotton, muslins plain and embroidered: they consist of both religions, but the Protestants are the most numerous.

Wallenfadt, July 28.

We quitted Salets this morning, in the same narrow open cart in which we arrived; and it would have afforded your curiosity matter of some speculation, to observe how we contrived to arrange ourselves, our servants, a large Newfoundland dog, and the baggage, in so narrow a compass: indeed we were so wedged in together, that it was almost impossible to stir, after we had once fixed ourselves in our several places. The day was sultry, and the sun powerful, the road bad, and the cart went barely at the rate of three miles an hour; but the country still continued so picturesque and mountainous, and our attention was so entirely taken up with the perpetual variety of objects  
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It presented to our view, as to make us forget the inconveniences of our equipage, and the excessive heat of the weather. From Trivabach, a small village upon the Rhine, we walked to Sargans, the capital of a bailliage of the same name, belonging to the eight antient cantons,

Let me remark by the way, that in Swisserland there are two sorts of baillies: the one consisting of certain districts, into which all the aristocratical cantons are divided; and over these a particular officer, called a *bailiff*, is appointed by government, to which he is accountable for his administration: the other sort are the territories that do not make part of the districts of the cantons, but are subject to two or more of them, who by turns appoint a bailiff. This officer, when not restrained by the peculiar privilege of certain districts, has the care of the police, jurisdiction in civil and criminal causes with some limitations; and has a stated revenue arising in different places from different duties and taxes. In case of exaction or mal-administration, an appeal always lies from the bailiff to the

the cantons, to which the bailliage belongs: and the place, the time, and the members who receive the appeal, are all regulated with the utmost exactness. With respect to this of Sargans, and the others belonging to the eight antient cantons conjointly; at the conclusion of the general diet held annually at Frauenfeld in Thurgovy, the deputies of these cantons resolve themselves into a Syndicate, examine the accounts of the public revenues as delivered in by the bailiffs of the respective districts, and receive and judge all appeals; in some cases, finally; but in the more important ones an appeal lies from this assembly to the superior tribunal of each canton. The theory of this institution, has a plausible appearance of impartiality: but how far the practice accords with the theory, I cannot pretend to determine. Whether a bailiff, who is guilty of extortion, is easily brought to justice, or more easily screened? how far the members of the Syndicate are liable to influence, or open to corruption? how far the expence of appeals renders them in many cases impracticable to the poorer inhabitants?

inhabitants? are questions which cannot be answered but by a person far more informed concerning these courts of justice than I have had an opportunity to be.

We arrived late at the town of Wallenstadt: it is incorporated into the bailiage of Sargans, but enjoys several distinct privileges. This little town derives its existence from being the passage of the merchandise transported from Germany through the Grisons to Italy. This communication occasions the frequent resort hither of Italian merchants; and that language is spoken by many of the inhabitants: a circumstance of great satisfaction to me; as from my ignorance of the German I have been frequently much streightened in obtaining all the information I want. Our landlord speaks Italian, and has been very accurate in his answers to my questions relating to the number of inhabitants, the government of the town, its dependence upon the bailiff, its privileges, &c. Nor is this to be wondered at: for the innkeepers in Switzerland are mostly *burgeffes*, and are frequently *members*

*members* of the sovereign council; besides that, from the very nature of their governments, the Swiss in general are well informed of every thing relating to their particular constitutions. I have also held a long conversation in the same language with a burgher of Glaris, who has furnished me with some information I can depend upon, in relation to that canton; which we purpose visiting to-morrow. I endeavour to ascertain the truth of these informations, by procuring as many as I can from different persons of all ranks; by laying them together; and then comparing them with the written accounts, if there be any.

Our stay is so short in most of the places we pass through, that I cannot expect to gain an accurate knowledge of every circumstance I wish to be acquainted with: but, though I may omit many things that are worthy of your curiosity, yet I shall attest nothing, of the truth of which I am not perfectly convinced. It is the fault of many travellers, to write from what they have read, and not from what they have seen; and to exaggerate the

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the relations of others : but I promise you that I will describe nothing, of which I have not been an eye-witness. The remarks I shall transmit to you, will be the genuine result of my own feelings ; and I had even rather be frequently wrong in my sentiments and reflections, than servilely follow the observations of others. On this you may therefore depend ; that though the conclusions may perhaps be false, the facts will certainly be true : and I flatter myself you will readily pardon any error in judgment, when my intention is neither to exaggerate or to deceive.

Wesen, July 29.

The lake of Wallenstadt is about sixteen miles in length, and two in breadth : it is entirely bounded by exceeding high mountains, except to the east and west. From this situation, a breeze generally blows from those two quarters, beginning at the break of day, and continuing for some hours ; then changes from west to east till sun-set : this breeze is very convenient for the transportation of the merchandise. Sometimes however a violent north-

north-wind rushes down from the mountains, and renders the navigation dangerous. We were assured by the inhabitants, and by the watermen who rowed us from Wallenstadt to this place, that the breeze above mentioned was generally constant : but we cannot attest it from our own experience ; as we set out this morning about eight, and the wind was directly contrary the whole way, blowing from west to east. The weather, 'tis true, was heavy, overcast, and rainy, which might cause perhaps this occasional variation.

The lake is uncommonly wild and picturesque, and affords a perpetual variety of beautiful and romantic scenes. On the side of Glaris, the mountains which border upon the lake, are chiefly cultivated ; enriched with wood ; or fine meadows ; and studded with cottages, churches, and small villages ; the Alps of Glaris rising behind ; their tops covered with snow. On the other side, for the most part, the rocks are exceedingly grotesque, craggy, inaccessible, and perpendicular : but here and there a few cultivated necks of land

are formed at the very edge of the lake, and at the bottom of these very rocks; exhibiting a beautiful contrast to the barrenness above and around them. Numberless water-falls, occasioned by the meltings of the snows, fall down the sides of these rocks from a very considerable height, and with an almost inconceivable variety; some of them seeming to glide gently in circular directions; others forming vast torrents, and rushing into the lake with noise and violence: all of them changing their form and their position as we approached or receded from them. The lake is exceedingly clear, deep, and cold, and, as we were informed, never freezes.

There is nothing remarkable in this place; being a small village situated almost upon the point where the river Linth issues from the lake of Wallenstadt: that little river is joined by the Limmat, and falls into the lake of Zurich.

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LETTER



## L E T T E R VI.

Glaris, July 29.

**T**HE canton of Glaris was formerly subject to the abbess of the convent of Seckingen in Suabia: the people however enjoyed very considerable privileges and a democratical form of government, under the administration of a mayor, appointed by the abbess, but chosen among the inhabitants. Towards the latter end of the thirteenth century, the emperor Rodolph I. obtained the exclusive administration of justice; and not long afterwards his son Albert, having purchased the mayoralty, which had insensibly become hereditary, re-united in his person the whole civil and judicial authority. Accordingly that prince, and his immediate descendants the dukes of Austria, oppressed the people, and ruled over them with an absolute sway. In 1350, Schweitz, assisted by Zurich, Lucerne, Uri, and Unterwalden, expelled the Austrians from the country of Glaris, re-established the democracy, and restored liberty to the people.

Glaris

Glaris now entered into a perpetual alliance with its deliverers, and was received into the Helvetic confederacy with some restrictions, which were not abolished until 1450. At that time it was the sixth canton, but is now the last in rank of the eight *antient* cantons, as they are called; being so distinguished, because, from the accession of Zug and Berne in 1352, more than a century elapsed before a new member was admitted. These *antient* cantons have also several privileges superior to the five others; the latter having submitted to some particular restrictions, upon their being received into the Helvetic league.

The people of Glaris enjoyed their liberties unmolested till 1388, when the Austrians made an irruption into the canton, with a force sufficient, as they arrogantly thought, totally to subdue it; pillaging the country, and massacring the inhabitants. It was then that three hundred and fifty troops of Glaris, assisted by thirty Switzers, resisted the whole strength of the Austrian army: the former were posted advantageously upon the mountains, and the latter, to the number of fifteen thou-

sand, at a village called Næfels. In this situation the Austrians began the attack ; but were soon compelled to retreat with great precipitation, by a shower of stones poured upon them from the heights : in this moment of confusion, the inhabitants rushed down upon the enemy with such redoubled fury, that they broke their ranks ; and, having made an immense slaughter, forced the remainder to retire from the canton. These surprising victories, gained by a handful of men against an enemy so much superior in number (instances of which are by no means rare in the history of Switzerland) render the wonderful combats of Marathon and Plataea, when the Greeks repulsed the numerous hosts of the whole Persian empire, perfectly credible. The same love of independence, the same dread of slavery, and the same attachment to their country, animated the respective nations to the same deeds of heroism ; and in both instances victory was followed by the same glorious consequence : for the Swiss, as well as the Greeks, owe the rise and preservation of their liberties to that magnanimous

nimous and determined valour which prefers death to living under the servile domination of an arbitrary despot. The people still celebrate the anniversary of this victory, which insured their independence for ever: and I saw near the village of Næfels several stones, with no other inscription than 1388: an inscription which no more requires explanation, to an inhabitant of the canton, than the glorious æra of 1688, to an Englishman.

In the sixteenth century, the reformation was introduced into this canton, but not exclusively: both religions are tolerated, and the two sects live together in the greatest harmony. This union is the more remarkable, when we consider the fatal quarrels that have been kindled in Switzerland on account of religious tenets; and that in Appenzel the division between the two sects is distinctly marked by their inhabiting different districts, and living under separate governments. In several parts of this canton, the Protestants and Catholics perform service in the same church, one after the other; and all the offices of state are amicably admini-

tered by the two parties. During the present and the preceding century, the Protestants have encreased considerably in number ; and their industry, in every branch of commerce, is greatly superior : an evident proof how much the bigotry and superstition of the church of Rome fetters the genius, and depresses the powers of exertion.

The government is entirely democratical : every person of the age of sixteen has a vote in the *Landsgemeind*, or general assembly, which is annually held in an open plain. This assembly ratifies new laws, lays contributions, enters into alliances, declares war, and makes peace. The *Landsdamman* is the chief of the republic, and is chosen alternately from the two sects ; with this difference, that the *Protestant* remains three years in office, the *Catholic* only two. The manner of election is as follows : five candidates are chosen by the people, and these draw lots for the charge. The other great officers of state, and the bailiffs, are taken also by lot from a certain number of candidates proposed by the people. The executive power is vested in the

council

council of regency, composed of forty-eight Protestants, and fifteen Catholics : each sect has its particular court of justice ; and, when there are any law-suits between two persons of different religions, the casting voice among the five or nine judges, who are to determine the cause, is always of the same religion as the defendant.

Cattle, cheese, and butter, constitute the principal commerce of the canton. The cattle are fed in summer upon the Alps : and it is computed that ten thousand head of large cattle, and four thousand sheep, are pastured during that season upon the mountains belonging to this canton. There are also some manufactures of linen ; and the inhabitants make a considerable quantity of thread.

July 30.

I am just returned to Glaris, after having made an excursion towards the extremity of the canton : it is entirely enclosed by the alps, except towards the north ; and there is no other entrance but through this opening, which lies between the lake of Wallenstadt and the mountains separating the canton of Glaris from that of Schweitz. Foot-passengers indeed may in

summer traverse these alps to the Grisons on one side, and to Uri on the other : but these paths, which even in the midst of summer are barely passable, are in winter absolutely impracticable. At the entrance above-mentioned, the canton reaches, from the banks of the Linth to the farthest extremity of its alps, about thirty miles ; forming a valley, which becomes narrower as you advance, and is scarcely more than a musket-shot in breadth at the burgh of Glaris. It afterwards opens by degrees ; and about a league from the last-mentioned burgh, is divided by the Freyberg mountains : at the point of this division the two rivers, Limmat and Sernft, unite.

We continued through the largest of these vales ; which, though very narrow, is exceedingly populous. You have been at Matlock in Derbyshire, and I remember your admiration of its beautiful and romantic situation : the scenery of this vale is of the same cast, but infinitely more picturesque, more wild, more varied, and more sublime. The Limmat is much broader and more rapid than the Derwent ; and the hillocks of the Peake (for I may so call them comparatively)  
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are mere mole-hills to the alps of Glaris. These stupendous chains of rocks are absolutely perpendicular, approach one another so near and are so high, that the sun may be said to set, even in summer, at four in the afternoon. On each side are numbers of those water-falls we had been so struck with during our passage over the lake of Wallenstadt; one in particular, near the village of Ruti, that foamed down the steep sides of a mountain, from the midst of a hanging grove of trees. I was so captivated with these enchanting scenes, that I could not help stopping every moment to admire them: as often as I did so, our guide, not conceiving it possible that these delays could be owing to any other cause than the laziness of his horse, never failed to strike the poor beast; and continually awakened me out of my rapturous contemplations. As I could not speak to be understood in German, it was some time before I could make him comprehend by signs, that I stopped by choice, and wished to go my own pace. After having rode about ten miles, we quitted our horses and walked. Near Leugelbach,  
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a considerable rivulet is formed at once by two streams, bursting from the ground at the foot of a mountain, which after a few paces unite, and fall into the Limmat : besides these two principal branches, there are several other smaller ones, together with numberless little fountains that gush from the rock. — The clearness of the streams ; their rapidity and murmuring sound ; the trees that hang over the point from whence they issue ; the rude rocks above ; the rich meadows and the scattered hamlets around — all together form an assemblage of the most lively and pleasing objects that ever entered into a beautiful landscape.

We crossed the Limmat several times, which runs through the valley with all the violence of a torrent ; and came at length to an amphitheatre of mountains, where the vale ended : on our right-hand a fall more considerable than any we had yet seen, tumbling down perpendicularly a bare rock in a large body of water ; the alps on each side crowned with inaccessible forests, and covered with everlasting snow ; before us a pyramidical mountain, bare and craggy ; and the glaciers of Glaris closing

closing the view. Here the vale, and the habitable part of the canton, terminate. We then quitted the plain, and ascending through a wild forest of beech and pines, continued more than an hour mounting a very steep and rugged path, till we came to the Panten-Bruck, a bridge over the cataract that forms the Limmat, which is here called the Sand-bach : it roars from the glacier down the steep mountain in one unbroken fall ; and, a little way before its arrival under the bridge, works itself a subterraneous passage through the rock, where it is lost only to appear again dashing out with increased violence and precipitation. This bridge is a single arch of stone, of about seventy feet in length, thrown over a precipice of above three hundred feet in depth. It serves as a communication with the upper alps, and is the passage for the cattle which are fed there during the summer months : on the other side some goats came jumping around us, and seemed to welcome us to their dreary habitations. These mountains are covered with a vast variety of rare herbs, and beautiful

tiful sweet-scented flowers, which made me regret that I had not pursued my botanical studies. As I leaned upon the parapet of the bridge, and looked down into the chasm beneath, my head almost turned giddy with the height. The rock, down which the Sand-bach drives, is composed of slate, of which there is a great quantity in this canton : the principal mine is in the valley of Sernft, where they make large slabs that serve for tables, and which form a considerable article for exportation. After we had continued some time admiring the sublime horror of the scenery, we descended into the vale, and made a hearty meal upon some excellent bread, honey, butter, and milk, with which a neighbouring cottage supplied us. As the canton almost entirely consists of rich meadows, the milk and butter are delicious ; and the honey of these mountainous countries is most exquisite. Nothing delights me so much as the inside of a Swiss cottage : all those I have hitherto visited, convey the liveliest image of cleanliness, ease, and simplicity ; and cannot but  
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strongly impress upon the observer a most pleasing conviction of the peasant's happiness.

If I had never seen these little democratical states, I could have formed no idea of the general equality and indistinction that prevails among the inhabitants. All the houses, like those of Appenzel, are built of wood ; large, solid, and compact, with great penthouse roofs that hang very low, and extend beyond the area of the foundation. This peculiar structure is of use to keep off the snow ; and, from its singularity, accords surprisingly with the beautiful wildness of the country. The houses of the richer inhabitants in the principal burghs, are of the same materials : the only difference consists in their being larger.

If that sort of government be confessedly the best, which constitutes the greatest good of the greatest number in the community ; these little states, notwithstanding the natural defects of a democratical constitution, may justly claim a large share of our approbation. General liberty, general independence, and an exemption from arbitrary taxes, are blessings which  
 amply

amply compensate for a want of those refinements that are introduced by opulence and luxury. However, it is only in these small republics, and in such a state of society, that this kind of general democracy can have place; where there are not any persons so rich as to gain an undue ascendancy over the people by largesses; and where, if they err in their councils, it is an error of the judgment and not of the heart. When a general corruption of the latter prevails, the evil is incurable, because the laws cannot reach it. In democracies, the machine of government is considerably indeed clogged by that variety of wheels required to put it into motion; but at the same time, it is not necessary here that its motions should be sudden and expeditious, as there is no fear of an invasion from without, and as the people have no conquests either to make or to defend; their principal policy consisting in maintaining their independence, and in preserving the public tranquillity.

The police is well regulated throughout Switzerland; and even in these democratical states, liberty does not degenerate into  
licentious-

licentiousness : we may except, perhaps, the day of their general assemblies, when it is impossible to prevent some degree of confusion in a meeting, where there is scarcely any distinction of persons, and where every peasant considers himself as equal to the first magistrate.

Our host is an open-hearted, honest Swiss : he brings his pint of wine with him, sits down to table with us, and chats without the least ceremony. There is a certain forwardness of this kind which I cannot bear, when it apparently is the effect of impertinent curiosity, or fawning officiousness ; but the present instance of frank familiarity, arising, as it evidently does, from a mind conscious of its natural equality, and unconstrained by arbitrary distinctions, is highly pleasing to me ; as I prefer the simple demeanour of unsophisticated nature, to all the false refinements of artificial manners.

I am, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R . VII.

Einsidlin, July 31.

**W**E could not pass through this part of the country, without making a pilgrimage to Einsidlin, and paying our respects to this celebrated shrine: an object of much devotion among the Catholics. Einsidlin, or Notre Dame des Hermites, is a rich and magnificent abbey of Benedictines in the canton of Schweitz, which owes its celebrity to the miraculous image, as it is called, of the Virgin Mary. The ridiculous tales they relate of the origin and aggrandisement of this abbey, are so many melancholy instances of the credulity of the darker ages: that they are still believed in the present enlightened century, must be attributed to the force of habitual prejudice; and at the same time proves, how difficult it is for the human mind to shake off those superstitious errors, which it has early imbibed under the sanctified name of religion.

In the ninth century a certain hermit  
called

called Meinrad, was the first who retired to this place, where he built a chapel, and was assassinated by robbers. But shall I tell you, or (what is more to the purpose) will you believe me if I tell you, that this murder was discovered by two crows, who followed the assassins to Zurich, where they were seized and executed? Soon after this the dead body of St. Meinrad must of course work miracles; and all the world pilgrimages to his bones. The sanctity of this place being thus established, some one (for whether it were St. Benno or St. Eberhard, or what other saint I cannot precisely determine) built another chapel, which he dedicated to the Virgin, and laid the first foundation of the abbey; having bequeathed for that purpose all his fortune: and the pious fund was soon considerably augmented by subsequent donations. Shall I tell you also that in 948, Conrad bishop of Constance, as he was going to consecrate the chapel, heard a voice from heaven, assuring him, that God himself had consecrated it? Whatever was its origin, and whoever was its founder; crowds of pilgrims



grims resort hither from all quarters to adore the Virgin, and to present their offerings : and it is computed, that upon the most moderate calculation, their number amounts yearly to 100,000. The circumjacent country was formerly one continued forest, which since the erection of the abbey has been gradually converted into rich pastures and beautiful meadows : and this is a miracle which the Virgin, in a certain sense, may truly be said to have performed.

August 1.

I have just been visiting the abbey, the chapel of the Virgin, and her immense treasures. The church of the abbey is a large and magnificent building, but exhibits a remarkable specimen of false taste, by being loaded with bad paintings, and superfluous ornaments. In the aisle not far from the entrance, is a small and elegant marble chapel of the Corinthian order : this is the celebrated shrine of the Virgin, to which the pilgrims resort. On the outside an angel supports the following inscription :

*His*

*Hic est plena remissio peccatorum omnium et culpa est  
parata.*

Over the door is a plate of silver with five holes, into which I saw several persons thrusting their fingers, and praying at the same time with great fervour: upon enquiry I found, that the credulous people believed these holes to be the marks of God's fingers. In the inside of this chapel is the image of the Virgin, which vies with the lady of Loretto both in *beauty* of countenance and richness of apparel; her face, as well as that of the child she holds in her arms, being black. She is richly dressed, and every week she changes her garment; her wardrobe consisting of fifty-two different suits.

The riches of the treasury are immense; containing an infinite number of offerings of gold, silver, and precious stones, arranged in the most ridiculous manner imaginable. There were also skulls and bones richly ornamented; whole skeletons of saints in masquerade, and of ladies with ruffles, fly-caps, and splendid apparel as if dressed for a ball. What a wretched insult upon poor human nature! I could

not help considering them with a mixture of pity and indignation, as the offerings of ignorance before the shrine of bigotry and superstition. The miracles which the Virgin has wrought in this country are infinite, if we may judge from the prodigious number of figures of ears, eyes, legs, arms, heads, &c. presented by those, who fancied themselves respectively cured in those several members, by the power of this wonder-working image.

I was glad however to find, in the midst of this superstitious trumpery, a good library, which contained some very fine editions of the classics.

In this place there is a considerable traffic carried on, of rosaries, crosses, little images, &c. ; and there are rows of shops, where nothing is to be purchased but these necessary appendages of the Roman catholic religion : it has all the appearance of a fair. There is also a room in the abbey, where the same kind of merchandise is exposed to sale ; and one of the friars attends to receive your money, and very gravely assures you, that the several articles have touched the sacred image.

Among

Among other curiosities of this kind, I purchased two ribands, for two pence each, with the following inscription upon them : *Ce Ruban entier, est la longueur ; jusqu'au trait est l'épaisseur, de l'image de notre dame des hermites. Il a touché l'image miraculeuse.*

Is it credible, that in this enlightened age, the most notorious superstition and imposture can appear thus barefaced? I must confess that these impositions raise my indignation : and, though it “ exceeds all power of face” to keep one’s countenance at their glaring absurdity ; yet every friend to true religion cannot at the same time but feel sensibly shocked, to see the purity of genuine christianity thus shamefully disguised and prostituted.

This abbey (consisting of sixty Benedictines that elect the abbot, who is titular prince of the empire) is very rich, and has considerable revenues in the canton of Zurich,

Rapperschwyl, August 2.

The evening, yesterday, being fine and cool, I walked from Einsidlin to this place. After we had, ascended about three miles,

a fine view of the lake of Zurich, and of the adjacent country, opened upon us at once. The prospect was extensive and beautiful; the solemn stillness of the evening, the calmness of the lake, and the tints of the setting sun, which glowed around the horizon, very much improved its charms. When we arrived at the lake, the moon began to rise; and, throwing its beams across the water, formed another scene, more mild indeed, but not less affecting. We then crossed the bridge of Rapperschwyl, built over the narrowest part of the lake: it measured near 1700 paces. The town is pleasantly situated upon a neck of land or promontory, that juts out into the lake. It formerly put itself under the protection of Uri, Schwitz, Unterwalden, and Glaris, with a reserve of all its privileges; but these cantons shamefully oppressing the inhabitants, and encroaching upon their liberties; Zurich and Berne took possession of the town in 1712, and restored to them their antient rights. From that period Rapperschwyl has been under the protection of Zurich, Berne, and Glaris; the latter having preserved its right  
by

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by its neutrality. By this treaty the town recovered its former prerogatives; and the inhabitants, in testimony of their gratitude, have placed the following inscription over the gates: *Amicis Tutoribus flores libertas*. They are all Catholics.

Yours, &c.

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## LETTER VIII.

Zurich, August 3.

**Y**ESTERDAY we dined luxuriously with the Capuchin friars at Rapperschwyll, who seldom regale their guests in so sumptuous a manner. It was one of their great feast-days; and accordingly they gave us every possible variety of fresh-water fish, with which the lake and the neighbouring rivers abound. The convent is built upon the edge of the water, and commands from some of the apartments a very agreeable prospect: the library is by far the pleasantest room, though not the most frequented. The cells of the monks are small, and yet not

inconvenient, but cleanliness does not seem to constitute any part of their moral or religious observances. Indeed the very habit of the order is ill calculated for that purpose, as they wear no shirt or stockings, and are clothed in a coarse kind of brown drugget robe, which trails upon the ground. Strange idea of sanctity! as if dirt could be acceptable to the Deity. I reflected with particular satisfaction, that I was not born a member of the Roman Catholic church; as perhaps the commands of a parent, a sudden disappointment, or a momentary fit of enthusiasm, might have sent me to a convent of Capuchins, and have wedded me to dirt and superstition for life.

After dinner we took leave of our hosts, and departed for Zurich by water: the lake is near ten leagues in length, and one in breadth. This body of water is not near so large as that of Constance; but the borders are studded thicker with villages and towns: and as we approached Zurich, the edges of the lake were skirted with a continued range of villas, which being intermixed among vineyards and pasture-grounds,

grounds, produced a most pleasing effect. The adjacent country is finely cultivated and well peopled; and the southern part of the lake appears at some little distance bounded with the high stupendous mountains of Schwytz and Glaris; the scenery all together is picturesque, lively, and diversified.

Zurich was formerly an imperial city, and obtained from the emperor Frederic II. very considerable privileges; which were acknowledged and augmented by several of his successors. The civil war between the magistrates and the people, in 1335, was very near reducing the city to ruins; but the former being banished, the citizens, in 1337, established a new form of government, which was confirmed by the emperor Louis of Bavaria. The exiles, after several fruitless attempts, were at length re-admitted; but it being discovered that they had engaged in a conspiracy against the citizens, they were all of them put to death. In consequence of this transaction, the nobles in the neighbourhood took up arms against the town: the latter, after having applied ineffectually



incessantly for assistance to the emperor Charles IV. entered into an alliance with the four cantons Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, and Underwalden, and was admitted a member of their confederacy. This event happened in the year 1351. The four cantons yielded the pre-eminence to Zurich, which privilege it enjoys at present; being the first canton in rank, and the most considerable in extent both of territory and power next to Berne. The same year, in which Zurich entered into this alliance, she was assisted by the four cantons above mentioned, against Albert duke of Austria, who besieged the town, and was repulsed with great loss.

Zurich was the first town in Switzerland, that separated from the church of Rome; being converted by the arguments of Zuingli \*. That celebrated reformer was born Jan. 1, 1484, at Wildehausen, a small

\* Of all the reformers (the mild and elegant Melancthon alone excepted) Zuingli seems to merit peculiar esteem: he possessed, to a great degree, that spirit of meekness, moderation, and charity, which are the characteristics of true christianity; and, amidst  
all

small village in the Torkenbourg; and when very young, was appointed curate of Glaris. Even before the publication of the sale of indulgences by Leo X. which was the more immediate cause of the reformation, Zuingli had exposed at Glaris several superstitions of the church of Rome; and he gained additional credit by preaching at Einsiedler against vows, pilgrimages, and offerings. After the publication of the sale of indulgences, while Luther was undermining the fabric of papal authority in Germany, Zuingli was no less successful in Switzerland. By his zeal and intrepidity, and by the irresistible

all the disputes between the Lutherans and the reformed churches, was a constant advocate for peace and reconciliation. He appears indeed to have been perfectly free, as well from that narrow bigotry which makes no distinction between points of the most indifference, and objects of the greatest importance; as from that overbearing pride, which, while it violently condemns the opinions of others, assumes to itself infallibility with respect to its own. In a word, it was his persuasion, that, provided christians agree in the most essential articles; they ought meekly to bear with any difference upon subjects less uncontroversial, and which do not necessarily influence morals.

force

force of truth, he gained so many converts at Zurich (where he had been invited to preach) that in 1524 the magistrates abolished the mass, and other Catholic ceremonies, and introduced the reformed religion. The disputes between the two sects were carried on with more temper and moderation than is usual in religious controversies. The change, which had been some time in agitation, was finally determined by a plurality of voices in the sovereign council: and the people readily and cheerfully obeyed the decision of their magistrates. The example of Zurich was soon followed by Berne, Schaffhausen, Basil, with part of Glaris and Appenzel; the other cantons continuing to adhere to the religion of their ancestors. From this period the two religions have been established in Switzerland; but that harmony, which had hitherto been preserved between them, has occasionally been interrupted. Indeed even so early as the year 1551, religious disputes broke out with so much violence and animosity, as to occasion the first civil war among the cantons; in which the Protestants were defeated,

defeated, and Zuingle lost his life at the battle of Cappel \*. Since that period two other religious wars have been kindled; one in 1656, in which the Catholics gained the advantage; and the other in 1712, when the Protestants proved victorious. The peace of Araw, which put an end to these unhappy disputes, has, it is to be hoped, finally composed all religious animosities. By that treaty, which may be considered as a sort of code of toleration among the Swiss; the treatment of the Protestants and Catholics in the common bailliages, is regulated. The first article stipulates, that in all the provinces, which are subject to cantons of different religion, there shall be a perfect equality between the two sects, and that they shall

\* It has been urged against Zuingle, as a proof of his persecuting principles, that he was personally engaged in this war against the Catholics. To this it may be answered, That he had used every argument in his power to bring about a reconciliation between the contending parties; that he even openly arraigned the impatient and turbulent zeal of his fellow-citizens; that he acted in obedience to one of the fundamental laws of the republic; and that he accompanied the army by the express command of the magistrates.

both

both enjoy the same privileges: to which is added an express prohibition to each party, not to make use of any terms of railery or contempt, in speaking of their respective worships.

This canton abounds in corn, wine, and excellent pastures: it is 46 miles by 30, and exceedingly populous; containing about an hundred and fifty thousand souls; of which there are upwards of twelve thousand in the capital. The sovereignty resides exclusively in the burgesses of the town; consisting in all of about two thousand; which peculiar restriction arises from the following circumstance:—During the earlier ages of the republic, the town being in possession of but a small extent of territory, the citizens of course exercised the powers of sovereignty; and when they afterwards gradually obtained considerable acquisitions, either by conquest or purchase, they still reserved to themselves this pre-eminence; all their new subjects being excluded from any share in the government. This remark will hold good with respect to the seven aristocratical cantons. I cannot but add, that

that a very narrow spirit of policy reigns throughout most of the states of Switzerland, as they seldom or never make a new citizen. This rule, however, in some of the republics is less scrupulously observed than in others. In Zurich indeed the citizens are so tenacious of their privileges, that (as I was informed by one of their magistrates) it is now an hundred and fifty years since they have admitted a new citizen. The burgeses, besides the advantage of electing their magistrates, and of aspiring to the administration of affairs, enjoy the sole right of commerce; all strangers, and even subjects of the canton, being excluded from carrying on any trade in the city.

The citizens or burgeses of Zurich, are divided into thirteen tribes: one of these consists of persons who do not exercise any trade, and are called the nobles. It is somewhat extraordinary, that in a republic absolutely commercial, such a distinction should be made; and that commerce should in any respect be considered as a degradation. All the other citizens following commerce, or exercising any trade,

are distributed among the twelve remaining classes.

The legislative authority is vested by the burgesses, in the sovereign council of two hundred; consisting, however, of two hundred and twelve members drawn from the thirteen tribes, and comprising the senate or little council. The latter is composed of twenty-four tribunes taken equally from twelve of the tribes, and four counsellors chosen by the tribe of the nobles: to these are added, twenty counsellors elected by the sovereign council; and all these with the two burgomasters make fifty members. Half of this little council administer the office during six months; at the end of which they are succeeded by the other half: the president of each division is one of the burgomasters, who are both chosen by the sovereign council and confirmed annually. They have jurisdiction in all causes civil and criminal: in the former, when the demand is of a certain importance, an appeal lies from the senate to the council of two hundred; but in criminal, their sentence is final, and, when once passed, there is no possibility of obtaining any reversal

verfal or mitigation. An excellent maxim provided the judges are cautious and circumspect, and the laws mild: for there is no greater encouragement to the commission of crimes, than the frequency of pardons. Such an institution however ought necessarily to exclude severity of punishment; and could never be admitted in a state, where by the letter of the law the same punishment is inflicted upon him who steals a sheep, as upon the man who murders his father.

Great therefore is the power of the senate, considered in their collective capacity; being absolute judges in all criminal causes, guardians of the police, and also the select body of men from whom the principal magistrates are chosen. But, as too great a power of individuals is dangerous in a republic; the several members of this assembly are liable to be changed: and a revision or confirmation is annually made, in some instances by the sovereign council, in others by the particular tribes to which the senators belong. This annual revision is a great check to mal-administration; and at the same time prevents



the senate from gaining so great an influence, as to be detrimental to the liberties of the people. A burges is qualified to vote at twenty ; is eligible into the sovereign council at thirty ; and into the senate at thirty-five. By these wise regulations, a man must have had some experience in public affairs before he is capable of holding a charge of any consequence. The revenues of government are more than proportionate to the expences ; which are regulated with the strictest œconomy. The state is not only without debts, but a saving is yearly made, and deposited in the public treasury, for a resort upon any sudden emergency. It was from this fund that the government supported the whole expence of the war in 1712, against the Catholic cantons, without imposing any additional tax.

Sumptuary laws, as well as those against immorality, are here well observed. The former indeed may exist, and be carried into execution even among a people much corrupted ; for it may be the policy of government to enforce their observance. But the severest penalties will not be sufficient to prevent crimes of an immoral tendency, amidst

amidst a general dissoluteness of manners ; it is the popular principles that can alone invigorate such laws, and give them their full operation. Among the Romans, the laws against adultery were severe ; and yet where was adultery more practised than at Rome ? In Zurich it is rigorously punished, without any distinction of rank, by fine, by expulsion from office, and by imprisonment : but the frequency of this crime is not so much restrained by the penalty annexed to it, as from the general good morals of the inhabitants. Secret crimes cannot be prevented ; but it is an evident proof of public virtue, when open breaches of morality are discountenanced. Among their sumptuary laws, the use of a carriage in the town is prohibited to all sorts of persons except strangers : and it is almost inconceivable that, in a place so very commercial and wealthy, luxury should so little prevail.

At Zurich there is more of the original Swiss spirit of independence, than in any of the large towns of this country. The magistrates, less influenced by foreign courts, and above corruption, consult al-

ways the real advantage of their canton, and of the Helvetic confederacy. Zurich still preserves in the general diet a very considerable sway; which she derives more from the opinion entertained of her integrity, than from her power: she is looked up to as one of the most independent and upright of the thirteen cantons.

The city of Zurich stands upon a gentle eminence on the northern extremity of the lake: a beautiful situation, and advantageous for commerce. For, by means of the river Limmat, which issues from the lake, and dividing the town, falls into the Aar; there is a communication with the Rhine. And this advantage has not been neglected; as the trade of the town is very extensive. The inhabitants are exceedingly industrious, and carry on with success several different branches of manufacture; the principal is that of crape. Their chief traffic is with France, Russia, Italy, and Holland.

Since the reformation many persons have flourished here eminent for their learning, in all branches of literature: and there is no town in Switzerland, where letters

ters are more encouraged, or where they are cultivated with greater success. I waited this morning upon the celebrated Gesner, author of the *Death of Abel*, and of several idyls, which for their delicate and elegant simplicity are justly esteemed. They abound with those nice touches of exquisite sensibility, which discover a mind warmed with the finest sentiments; and love is represented in the chastest colouring of innocence, virtue, and benevolence. Nor has he confined his subjects merely to the tender passion: paternal affection, and filial reverence; gratitude, humanity, in short every moral duty is exhibited and inculcated in the most pleasing and affecting manner. He has for some time renounced poetry in order to take up the pencil; and painting is at present his favourite amusement. A treatise which he has published on landscape-painting, shews the elegance of his taste and the versatility of his genius; while his compositions in both kinds prove the resemblance of the two arts; and that the conceptions of the poet and of the painter are congenial. I prefer his drawings in black and white, to his paintings;

for, although the ideas in both are equally beautiful or sublime, his colouring is inferior to his design. He is preparing an handsome edition of his writings in quarto, in which every part of the work is carried on by himself : he prints them at his own private press ; and is at once both the drawer and engraver of his plates. It is to be lamented that he has renounced poetry ; for, while ordinary writers spring up in great plenty ; authors of real genius are rare and uncommon. His drawings are seen only by a few, and will scarcely be known to posterity : but his writings are dispersed abroad, translated into every language, and will be admired by future ages, as long as there remains any relish for true pastoral simplicity, or any taste for original composition. He is plain in his manners ; open, affable, and obliging in his address ; and of singular modesty : he has nothing of the poet in his appearance except in his eye, which is full of sense, fire, and expression.

We waited also on Mr. Lavater, a clergyman of Zurich, and celebrated physiognomist, who has published a famous treatise  
on

on that fanciful subject. He expressed himself badly in French ; but there was an agreeable warmth and vivacity in his countenance and manner, while he conversed upon his favourite subject. That particular passions have a certain effect upon particular features, is evident to the most common observer ; and it may be conceived, that an habitual indulgence of these passions may possibly, in some cases, impress a distinguishing mark on the countenance : but that a certain cast of features constantly denotes certain passions ; and that by contemplating the former, we can infallibly discover also the mental qualities of the owner, is an hypothesis liable (I should think) to so many exceptions, that no general and uniform system could be justly formed upon it. Nevertheless Mr. Lavater, like a true enthusiast, carries his theory much farther : for he not only pretends to discover the characters and passions by the features, by the complexion, by the form of the head, and by the motion of the arms ; but he also draws some inferences of the same kind even from one's

hand-writing. And indeed his system is formed upon such universal principles, that he applies the same rules to all animated nature, extending them not only to brutes, but even to insects. That the temper of a horse may be discovered by his countenance, will not strike you as any thing absurd : but did you ever hear before that any quality could be inferred from the physiognomy of a Bee, or of an Ant ? While I give you my opinion thus freely concerning Mr. Lavater's notions, you will readily perceive that I am not one of those, who are initiated into the mysteries of his art. Nor do I mean to censure indiscriminately the system of that celebrated writer : for, notwithstanding the extravagance of some of his tenets, the severest critics allow, that there is a fund of good sense and a variety of fine observations dispersed throughout his treatise ; and that it is one of those works, which, to be admired, needs only to be read with attention.

The clergy of Zurich are in general better paid than in the other Protestant cantons ; and among that body there are some, who  
are

are very decently provided for : a circumstance rather uncommon in the Reformed or Presbyterian churches.

The public granary, on account of its admirable institution, deserves to be particularly mentioned. Corn is purchased by government, and given out to those who choose to buy it, at the common price ; but in seasons of scarcity it is sold considerably cheaper, than it can be bought at the market. The use of this institution appeared in the late dearth : when bread, from the dearth of corn, was sold at ten pence the pound, government delivered the same quantity for four pence.

The arsenal is well supplied with cannon, arms, and ammunition ; and contains a reserve of muskets for thirty thousand men. We saw there, and admired, some of the two-handed swords and weighty armour of the old Swiss warriors ; as also the bow and arrow with which William Tell is said to have shot the apple off the head of his son.

This canton has a regiment and some companies in the service of France, a regiment in that of Holland, and some companies  
in



in the service of the King of Sardinia. It has long been a question, how far Switzerland has been benefited by enlisting her subjects in foreign armies. But, without entering into that enquiry, I shall only observe, that Zuingli violently declaimed against this practice, as introducing a corruption of morals : and he had interest sufficient to prevent Zurich from joining in the general alliance, which all the Swiss cantons entered into with Francis I. Since that period, Zurich continued firm in her refusals until the reign of Henry IV. when this canton finally acceded to the treaty with that monarch.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R IX.

Zug, August 5.

**W**E walked yesterday to Albis, a small village about three leagues from Zurich, situated upon the summit of a steep mountain, which commands a fine view of that town, the lake, and its environs. We were lucky in escaping a violent shower  
of

of rain, accompanied with a storm of thunder and lightning, which had threatened for some time, and began immediately upon our arrival : but we were well housed, and our host gave us a good supper and an excellent bottle of Muscat wine. We were abroad this morning by five, and had a very agreeable walk to this place ; the weather, which had of late been very sultry, being cooled by the lightning and rain. We passed over the field of battle at Cappel, where Zuingle was killed ; and continued our way along the fields through a pleasant country, so thickly planted with fruit-trees, that I could hardly distinguish any other sort. Indeed, we had before remarked the prodigious number of those trees in several other parts of Swisserland ; the country being in many places almost one continued orchard.

Zug, the capital of this canton (and the only walled town among all the popular ones) stands delightfully upon the edge of a beautiful lake, in a fertile valley, abounding with corn, pasture-ground, and fruit-trees. This canton formerly belonged to the House of Austria ; and it continued

rued faithful to that family when the other neighbouring states had formed themselves into independent republics. As it lies between Zurich and Schweitz, the communication between those two cantons was kept up with difficulty ; and by this means frequent opportunities were afforded to the house of Austria of invading and harassing the Swiss. Under these circumstances, the six allied cantons, in 1351, laid siege to Zug, which was resolutely defended by the inhabitants ; but as Albert duke of Austria was in no condition to send them any assistance, the town at length surrendered upon the most honourable conditions. The generosity of the conquerors was equal to the courage and magnanimity of the vanquished : for, in consequence of this submission, the inhabitants of the canton of Zug were delivered from the yoke of a foreign master, obtained the most assured liberty and independence, and were admitted into the Helvetic confederacy upon equal terms.

The government of this little canton is exceedingly complicated ; and the inhabitants of this town have somewhat more influence,

influence, and enjoy a greater share in the administration of affairs, than those of the capital burghs in the five other democratical cantons. The supreme power resides in the inhabitants of the four districts of Zug, Bar, Egeri, and Meutzingen; who assemble yearly (like those of Glaris and Appenzel) to enact laws, and to choose their magistrates. The Landamman is elected by the suffrages of the whole collective districts, but is taken alternately from each of the four communities above-mentioned: he continues three years in office, when taken from the district of Zug, and but two years when chosen from each of the three others. And there is this peculiar difference between the five other cantons and that of Zug; that, whereas in the former the Landamman, upon the expiration of his office, always retains a considerable pre-eminence in the council of regency; in the latter, when he quits his charge, he has not the least distinction above any other counsellor. The general administration of affairs is entrusted to the council of regency, composed of forty members; of which the district

strict of Zug furnishes thirteen, and the others are taken equally from the three remaining communities. This council, as well as the Landamman, resides always in the capital town.

Oswald, one of our old British kings, is the titular Saint of this place; and in the church is his statue, with the following inscription :

*Sanctus Oswaldus Rex Angliæ Patronus hujus Ecclesiæ.*

This Oswald was (if I remember right) a king of Northumberland in the seventh century; and is much renowned among the monkish writers for his chastity, piety, and power of working miracles. I have been endeavouring to make out, what connection a British king, under the heptarchy, could have had with a small canton of Swisserland; without reflecting, how fruitless is the attempt to give any reason for absurd customs. In the church of Rome, saints are easily transplanted into any soil; and caprice, as well as superstition, may have inclined the inhabitants  
of

of Zug to adore a saint, whose name is barely known in his own country.

I am, &c.

## LETTER X.

Lucerne, August 6.

WE took boat at Zug, and being rowed across the lake (which is about three leagues long, and one broad) were landed at a small village in the canton of Schweitz. From thence we walked to Kuffnacht; and in our way passed by a small chapel sacred to William Tell, erected on the spot where, it is said, he shot the Austrian governor. At Kuffnacht, we embarked upon the lake of Lucerne; and were much struck upon our approach with the fine view of that town, which we thought superior even to Zurich in the beauty of its situation.

Lucerne, originally subject to the house of Austria, was continually exposed to the inroads of Uri, Schweitz, and Underwalden, after those cantons had secured their own

own liberty and independence. All her commerce to Italy, was by this means interrupted ; her fairs unfrequented ; and her citizens compelled to be ever in arms, in order to protect their territory from incessant depredations. Under these circumstances, the house of Austria, instead of giving the citizens any effectual assistance, imprudently loaded them with additional taxes, as exorbitant as they were unjust. The consequence was, that Lucerne made her peace with the confederate cantons ; and, having soon after driven out the Austrian party, entered into a perpetual alliance with Uri, Schwetz, and Unterwalden, and became a member of the Helvetic confederacy.

The accession of Lucerne gave additional credit and power to the confederacy ; and enabled it, in 1386, to resist all the efforts of a great and implacable enemy. In that year, Leopold duke of Austria invaded the canton with a numerous army ; where the combined troops gained a bloody victory at Sempach, in which Leopold lost his life. In the accounts of this battle, an instance of private valour in an individual

vidual is recorded; which would have done honour to a Grecian or a Roman name, and only wants the pen of a Thucydides or a Livy to be equalled in fame to the exploits of the most admired heroes of antiquity. The Austrian army, far superior in number, was drawn up in firm battalion, accoutred in heavy armour, and furnished with long pikes, which they presented before them. The Swiss troops were led on to the attack in the form of a wedge, in order to open their way into the ranks of the enemy, and to break the solidity of the battalion. The latter, nevertheless, continuing for some time impenetrable; Arnold de Winkelried, a native of Underwalden, rushed alone upon the enemy to certain death; and, seizing as many pikes as he could grasp, endeavoured to force through the ranks: but he was killed in the attempt. His patriotic valour, however, was not exerted in vain: it inflamed the Swiss with new courage, and taught them the best method of penetrating into the battalion; which they at length effected, after the most desperate efforts of invincible resolution.

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Leopold



Leopold himself might have escaped, when his troops first began to give way; but, with a magnanimity worthy of a better fate, he determined, after having been a witness to the total rout of his army, not to survive so ignominious a day: accordingly he rushed into the thickest of the enemy, and was slain. In the arsenal of this place are still preserved his armour, together with a large quantity of cords; which, according to the tradition of the country, he is said to have brought with him, in order to bind the citizens of Lucerne. The keeper of the arsenal displayed them to us with the same kind of triumph, as the man, who shews the Tower of London, points out the chains that were taken on board the Spanish armada; which, he tells you, Philip II. destined for the principal nobility of England.

The government of Lucerne is entirely aristocratical, or rather indeed oligarchical. There are five hundred citizens in the town, from whom a council of one hundred, comprising the senate or council of state, are chosen. The former  
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is the nominal sovereign ; but the whole power actually resides in the latter, consisting of thirty-six members, who are formed, like that of Zurich, into two divisions, which exercise the office by rotation. But the members of this senate are far from being subject to the same controul as at Zurich : for, they are neither confirmed by the sovereign council, nor by the citizens, but are only dependent upon themselves ; the division which retires at the end of six months, confirming that which comes into office. Besides, the vacant places in the senate are filled up by their own body ; so that the power remains in the possession of a few patrician families : and, as the son generally succeeds his father, or the brother his brother, the senatorial dignity may be considered, in some measure, as hereditary.

The administration of the current affairs ; the care of the police ; the management of the finances ; and the whole executive power ; resides in the senate, which sits constantly : whereas the supreme council is assembled only upon particular

ticular occasions, for the purposes of legislation, and the like. The senate has cognizance of criminal causes; but in case of capital condemnation, the sovereign council is convoked in order to pronounce the sentence: a practice worthy of imitation! for, the condemnation of a criminal cannot be too maturely weighed; and the more solemnity is used in pronouncing the sentence, the greater effect it must have upon the minds of the people. In civil causes, an appeal lies from the senate to the sovereign council: but this must be a mere formality; as, in effect, it is an appeal from the senators in one court to the same senators in another. Indeed, their influence over the sovereign council must necessarily be absolute: for, they themselves constitute above a third of that body; choose their own members; are in possession of the principal charges of government, and confer most of them. They have the nomination also to the vacant ecclesiastical benefices, which are very considerable; near two thirds of the revenues of the canton belonging to the clergy.

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The chiefs of the republic are two Avoyers, who are chosen from the senate by the council of one hundred, and are confirmed annually. In all elections whatsoever, the relations of the candidates, to the third degree, are excluded from voting: and neither the father and the son, nor two brothers, can be members of the senate at the same time. Excellent institutions, one should think, to prevent the too great influence of family-connections! excellent indeed in theory, but useless in practice: and this circumstance proves, that when the spirit of the constitution is purely oligarchical, any laws passed in order to counteract the power of the nobles, are mere cyphers. In some few instances, however, the exorbitant authority of the nobles is checked: for, in case of declaring war and peace, forming new alliances, or of imposing new taxes, the citizens must be assembled, and give their consent.

As Lucerne is first in rank and power among the Catholic cantons; all affairs relative to religion are treated of in the diet which assembles in this town every year,

composed of the deputies of those cantons : and the pope's nuncio resides here. The town contains scarcely three thousand inhabitants ; has no manufactures of any consequence, and little commerce ; and as to learning, it no where meets with less encouragement, and consequently is no where less cultivated. What a contrast to Zurich ! The population of the canton has considerably encreased within this century : a sure proof of a mild and equitable government. The inhabitants are, as I am informed, almost totally engaged in agriculture. The southern parts of the canton are chiefly mountainous, and furnish for exportation cattle, hides, cheese, and butter. All the northern part is fruitful in corn ; the crops of which being more than sufficient for the consumption of the whole canton, there is a constant exportation of this article from the weekly market held in the town ; to which the inhabitants of the neighbouring democratical cantons resort, in order to purchase that and other necessaries in which their own country is deficient. The overplus that is wanted to supply this market, is drawn from  
S. iabia

Suabia and Alface. This commerce, which (together with the passage of the merchandise for Italy) is the chief support of the town, might be exceedingly improved and augmented, considering its advantageous situation: for, the Reufs issues from the lake, passes through the town, and, having joined the Aar, falls into the Rhine.

The whole of what is remarkable in the town, may be comprised in a very short description. The cathedral and the Jesuits' church, are the only public buildings worth observing; but they are too much loaded with rich ornaments, and disgraced by bad paintings. In the cathedral is an organ of a fine tone, and of an extraordinary size: of the latter you may judge by the dimensions of the center pipe; which, as the priest assured me, is forty feet in length, and near three in breadth, and weighs eleven hundred pounds. The bridges which skirt the town, round the edge of the lake, are the fashionable walks of the place, and remarkable for their length. They are covered at top, and open at the sides; by which means one

has a constant view of this delightful and romantic country. They are decorated with wretched paintings, consisting of the histories of the Old Testament, the battles of the Swifs, and the dance of Death.

Upon our arrival here yesterday, we sent a letter of recommendation to general Pfiffer ; who received us immediately, with his usual civility. We had heard so much of a topographical representation he has formed of part of Swisserland, that we were anxious to get a sight of it ; as indeed it well deserves particular notice, and merits the most accurate attention of the curious traveller. The ingenious artist is a native of Lucerne, and general in the French service, and has devoted his leisure time to the compleating of this work. It is a model in relief ; and what is at present finished contains about sixty square leagues of the most mountainous parts of Swisserland ; namely, part of the cantons of Lucerne, Zug, and Berne, together with the whole of Uri, Schweitz, and Underwalden : and the general has taken elevations and drawings for above as much more.

more. The model of what is completed is twelve feet long, and nine and a half broad. The principal part is composed of wax; the mountains of stone; and the whole is coloured: but what deserves more particular observation is, that not only the woods of beech, of pine, &c. are differently marked; but also the outward strata of the several mountains, as well as their form, are distinguished. General Pfiffer has already been employed in this work about ten years, with the utmost patience and assiduity: he has himself raised the plans upon the spots, taken the elevations of the mountains, and laid them down in their several proportions. The plan is so minutely exact, that it takes in not only all the mountains, lakes, rivers, towns, villages, and forests; but every cottage, every torrent, every bridge, and even every cross is distinctly and accurately represented. In the prosecution of this laborious performance, he has been twice arrested for a spy; and in the popular cantons has frequently been forced to work by moon-light, in order to avoid the jealousy of the peasants, who think their



their liberty would be endangered, should so exact a plan be taken of their country. As he is obliged to remain some time upon the tops of the Alps, where no provision can be procured; he generally carries with him a few she-goats, whose milk supplies him with nourishment. Indeed his perseverance in surmounting all the difficulties, that necessarily have arisen in the course of this undertaking, is almost inconceivable. When he has finished any particular part, he sends for the peasants who reside near the spot, especially those who hunt the chamois, and bids them examine accurately each particular mountain; whether it corresponds, as far as the smallness of the scale will admit, with its natural appearance: and then, by frequently re-touching, he corrects the deficiencies. He takes all his elevations from the level of the lake of Lucerne; which, according to Mr. De Saussure, is about fourteen hundred and eight feet above the Mediterranean.

This model, exhibiting the most mountainous parts of Switzerland, conveys a  
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sublime

sublime picture of an immense body of alps piled one upon another: as if the story of the Titans were realized, and they had succeeded (at least in one part of the globe) in heaping an Ossa upon a Pelion, and an Olympus upon an Ossa. The general informed me (and it is somewhat remarkable) that the tops of the alps which cross Swisserland in the same line, are nearly of the same level; or in other words, there are continued chains of mountains of the same elevation, rising in progression to the highest range; and from thence gradually descending in the same proportion towards Italy.

He is exceedingly polite and affable to strangers, and ever ready to be of any service to travellers, in pointing out to them the best roads, and in acquainting them with the places most worthy of observation. From what I saw of him, he seemed to be a man of a more lively imagination, than one should have expected, considering the indefatigable patience and laborious precision necessary for the execution of a work of this nature.

Near Lucerne is Mount Pilate, formerly called Mons *Pileatus*, from the Latin word

word *pilea* ; its top being generally covered with a cloud or cap. This word has been corrupted into *Pilatus* ; and from this alteration a thousand ridiculous stories have been invented ; among others, that Pontius Pilate, after having condemned our Saviour to death, was seized with remorse, made a little excursion into Switzerland, and drowned himself in a lake, which is at the top of this mountain. This corruption of a word, and this absurd legend fabricated from its alteration, will naturally remind you of several others of similar absurdity, which are seriously related by the Greek writers : a circumstance which my very worthy and learned friend Mr. Byrant, has so amply and ably discussed, in his *Analysis of ancient Mythology*.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R XI.

Altdorf, August 7.

**T**HE Waldstær See, or the lake of the four cantons, is by far the most beautiful and diversified body of water of this kind

kind I have yet seen. The upper branch, or the lake of Lucerne, is in the form of a cross; the sides of which stretch from Kuffnacht to Dallenwal, a small village near Stantz, the capital of the canton of Underwalden. It is bounded towards the town of Lucerne (which forms a fine object upon its north-western extremity) by cultivated hills sloping gradually to the water, contrasted on the opposite side by an enormous mass of barren and craggy rocks. Mount Pilate rises boldly from the lake, and is perhaps one of the highest mountains in Swisserland, if estimated from its base, and not from the level of the sea. According to general Pfiffer, its elevation above the lake is more than six thousand feet: nevertheless its height above the Mediterranean, is nothing in comparison with that of the alps we are going to visit; nor indeed does the snow continue all the year upon its summit. It is a single insulated mountain: and is divided at its top into two rugged points, which, when not covered with clouds, form a most majestic appearance.

Towards the end of this branch, the  
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mountains

between Uri, Schweitz, and Underwalden \*. From this point we had a glimpse of Schweitz, the capital burgh of the canton, about two miles from Brunnen : it stands farther within the land, at the bottom of two very high, sharp, and rugged rocks.

Here we turned short to our right hand and entered the third branch, or the lake of Uri ; the scenery of which is so amazingly grand and sublime, that the impression it made upon me will never be erased from my mind. Imagine to yourself a deep and narrow lake about nine miles in length, bordered on both sides with rocks uncommonly wild and romantic, and, for the most part, perpendicular ; with forests of beech and pine growing down their sides to the very edge of the water : indeed the rocks are so entirely steep and overhanging, that it was with difficulty we could observe more than four or five spots, where we could have landed. On the right-hand, upon our first entrance, a detached piece of rock, at a small distance from the shore, engaged our attention. It rises to about

\* See p. 120. et seq.

sixty feet in height ; is covered with brush-wood and shrubs ; and reminded me in some degree of those that shoot up in the middle of the fall of the Rhine near Schaffhausen : but here the lake was as smooth as chrystal ; and the silent, solemn gloom which reigned in this place, was not less awful and affecting than the tremendous roaring of the cataract in the other. Somewhat farther, upon the highest point of the Seelisberg, we observed a small chapel that seemed inaccessible ; and below it, the little village of Gruti, near which the three heroes of these cantons are said to have met, and to have taken reciprocal oaths of fidelity, when they planned the famous revolution \*.

On the opposite side, but farther on, appears the chapel of William Tell, erected in honour of that hero, and upon the very spot where (it is said) he leaped from the boat, in which he was carrying prisoner to Kussnacht. It is built upon a rock that juts out into the lake under a hanging wood : a situation amid scenes so strikingly awful, as cannot fail of strongly affecting

\* See page 120.

even the most dull and torpid imagination ! On the inside of this chapel, the several actions of William Tell are badly painted. While we were viewing them, we observed the countenances of our watermen glistened with exultation, and they related to us, with much spirit and sensibility, the cruelties and tyranny of Gesler, governor of Uri, and the intrepid behaviour of their glorious deliverer. Indeed I have frequently remarked with pleasure, the national enthusiasm which so generally prevails in this country ; and have greatly admired the fire and animation with which the people discourse of those famous men among their ancestors, to whom they are indebted for that happy state of independence which they now enjoy. This laudable spirit is continually kept up and encouraged by the number of statues, and other memorials, of the antient Swiss heroes, which are so common in every town and village throughout Swisserland. Among these, Tell is the most distinguished, and he seems to be the peculiar favourite of the common people : the reason is obvious ; for, his story partakes greatly of the marvellous.

A man

A man of letters at Berne has written a treatise, entitled *Fable Danoise*, in which he calls in question the history of William Tell. His arguments in general are by no means conclusive ; he mentions, however, two circumstances, which, if true, are convincing proofs, that much fiction is interwoven with the whole account : for, the author asserts that the incident of Tell's shooting the apple off the head of his son, is not recorded in any of the contemporary historians, although they give the minutest accounts of the governor's tyranny ; and that the first writer who takes notice of it, is Petermann Etterlin of Lucerne, who lived in the latter end of the fifteenth century, near two hundred years after the fact is supposed to have happened. Besides, a story of the same kind is related in the Danish annals by Saxo Grammaticus, with no other difference than that of names ; Herald king of Denmark supplying the place of the governor of Uri ; and Tocco that of William Tell : and this event, which is said to have happened in 965, is attended also with nearly the same incidents, as those recorded in the Swiss

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accounts.



accounts \*. Nevertheless, it is far from being a necessary consequence, that, because the authenticity of the story concerning the apple is liable to some doubts; *therefore* the whole tradition relating to Tell is fabulous. Neither is it a proof against the reality of a fact, that it is not mentioned by any contemporary historians. The general history of William Tell is repeatedly celebrated in several old German songs, so remarkable for their antient dialect and simplicity, as almost to raise the deeds they celebrate above all reasonable suspicion: add to this, the constant tradition of the country, together with two chapels erected some centuries ago, in memory of his exploits.

The three cantons were so much offended with the author for throwing any doubt upon the exploits of their antient hero, that they presented a remonstrance to the sovereign council of Berne: and the pamphlet in question was publicly burnt at Uri. In this instance their national pre-

\* As Saxo Grammaticus is an author but little known, and the passage in question being exceedingly curious; the reader will find it inserted in the Appendix.  
judices

judices (if they really deserve that name) become, in some sort, meritorious and respectable.

The cross bow is still much used in these parts, as I had an opportunity of observing upon our landing at Fluellen, where I saw several very young boys, each with a cross bow in his hand. There happened to be a butt at a small distance from the place ; and I gave them to understand, that those who hit the mark should receive a penny for their dexterity. Upon this intimation, three boys took aim successively, two of whom hit the very centre of the butt, and obtained the prize accordingly : but, the third missing, I made him shoot till he touched the mark ; which, after two or three trials, he at length performed.

From Fluellen we walked to Altdorf, the capital burgh of the canton of Uri, situated in a narrow vale almost intirely surrounded by stupendous mountains. It contains several neat houses ; the tops whereof are covered with large detached stones, placed there in order to prevent the roofs being carried away by those violent

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storms,

storms, that frequently rush down from the neighbouring mountains into this valley.

When the greatest part of Helvetia was subject to the empire ; the inhabitants of Uri, Schweiz, and Underwalden, had long enjoyed the most considerable privileges, particularly the right of being governed by their own magistrates : the clergy and many of the nobles, indeed, had fiefs and subjects in those respective territories ; but the bulk of the people formed several communities almost totally independent. During the twelfth century, various disputes which these three cantons had with the emperors, united them more firmly than ever ; and they were accustomed every ten years to renew formally their alliance with each other. Such was their situation at the death of Frederic II, in 1250. From this period, or soon afterwards, commences the interregnum in the empire : during which time of anarchy and confusion, the nobles and bishops endeavouring to extend their power, and to encroach upon the privileges of the people ; Uri, Schweiz, and Underwalden, put themselves under  
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the protection of Rhodolph of Habsbourg, who, in 1270, being chosen emperor, terminated the interregnum. Rhodolph had a revenue assigned to him by these cantons; and he appointed a governor, who had cognizance in all criminal causes: the rights, however, and privileges of the people were expressly reserved.

Rhodolph, some time after his accession to the throne of the empire, listened to the ambitious schemes of his son Albert duke of Austria, who was desirous to form Helvetia into a dutchy. For this purpose the emperor purchased the domains of several abbeys, and other considerable fiefs in Switzerland, as well in the canton of Schweitz as in the neighbouring territories. The great increase of power, which the emperor gained by this acquisition, induced the three cantons to renew their alliance, and to demand a confirmation of their privileges: and their demands were granted. Upon the death of Rhodolph, Adolphus of Nassau succeeded him, from whom they obtained the same confirmation. But when Albert was afterwards chosen emperor, he refused to ratify it:

and, in order totally to subdue the people, he placed over them two governors, who were guilty of many flagitious acts of tyranny and oppression,

Under these circumstances Werner de Staffach of Schweitz, Walther Furst of Uri, and Arnold de Melchtall of Underwalden, planned the famous revolution, which took place January 13, 1308, and restored liberty to the three cantons. Albert, while he was preparing to attack them, was \* assassinated by his nephew  
John

\* The occasion of this assassination, and the circumstances attending it, were as follow:—Albert, as guardian to his nephew John of Habsbourg, had taken possession of his hereditary dominions, and refused to deliver them up to him under various pretences. At length, wearied with repeated solicitations to no purpose, John entered into a conspiracy against his uncle with Rhodolph de Warth, Ulric de Palme, Walther d'Eschenbach, and Conrad de Tagerfeld.

The emperor dined at Baden, in his way to Rheinfelds, a town in the circle of Suabia, where was the empress his wife with a considerable body of troops, with which he proposed attacking the three cantons. Contemporary historians, who have recorded the minutest circumstances of this assassination, relate, that Albert was in very high spirits during the repast; and  
that

**John of Habsbourg.** In 1315, Leopold duke of Austria marched against the confederate

that upon his nephew again entreating to be put into possession of his hereditary dominions, the emperor, with an air of banter, placed a garland of flowers upon his head, adding, at the same time, "This will be more suitable to you, for the present, than the cares of a troublesome government." This taunt had such an effect upon the young man, that he burst into tears, flung away the flowers, and could not be prevailed upon to sit down to the table.

After dinner Albert continued his journey on horseback, accompanied by his son Leopold, the conspirators, and the rest of his usual attendants; and came, near the town of Windisch, in the canton of Berne, to the Reufs. Over this river, there was no bridge, but passengers were usually ferried upon a raft. The conspirators passed over first; and immediately after them Albert, who rode gently on, waiting for his son Leopold, and the remainder of his suite. As he was riding through a field, not far from the castle of Habsbourg, and opposite to the town of Brugg, which lies on the other side of the Aar, the assassins suddenly beset him. One of them seizing his horse's bridle, John of Habsbourg reproached him for his injustice in detaining his dominions; and, without waiting for an answer, struck him on the neck with his sword. Rhodolph de Warth wounded him in the side; and Ulric de Palme clove his head with his sabre. In this condition they left him expiring upon the ground.

This assassination was committed the 1st of May

federate cantons with an army of twenty thousand men ; and, endeavouring to force his way into the canton of Schweitz at the

1308, in the open day, and in the sight of his son Leopold and the rest of his court, who had not as yet passed the river ; and, though they were witnesses to the murder, it was not in their power to give the emperor any assistance. The field lies between the Aar and the Reufs, not far from the junction of those two rivers ; and the very spot, where he was massacred, is marked by a convent, erected by his wife Elifabeth, and his daughter-in-law Agnes, the widow of his son Rhodolph king of Bohemia : the place was called Konigsfeld, or King's field ; a name it retains to this day. The remains of the emperor were buried in the convent of Witterling, from whence they were afterwards transported to Spire, and there interred.

The assassins escaped without being pursued ; and retired into the cantons of Uri, Schweitz, and Underwalden, expecting to find a sure asylum in a nation, which Albert was preparing to invade. But those generous people, detesting a crime of so atrocious a nature, although committed upon the person of their greatest and most formidable enemy, refused to give the murderers any protection. D'Ëschenbach concealed himself in the disguise of a common labourer during thirty years ; nor was his rank discovered till he confessed it upon his death-bed ; De Palme, destitute of common necessities, died of extreme poverty ; and De Warth, tied to a horse's tail, like a common malefactor, and dragged to the place of execution, was broken

the streights of Morgarten, received a total defeat from thirteen hundred Swiss, who were posted upon the mountains. If we may believe contemporary historians, the confederate troops lost but fourteen men in this memorable engagement, which insured their independence for ever. This

upon the wheel. Some historians relate, that he was the first person who ever suffered that species of torture ; that he remained three days in the most dreadful agonies ; and that his wife (such was the proof she gave of her affection !) attended him to the place of execution, nor could be prevailed upon to withdraw herself till he expired. John of Habsbourg, commonly distinguished by the appellation of *parricide* from this assassination, did not reap the benefit from his crime that he expected : for, by order of the emperor Henry VII. he retired into a monastery of Augustin friars at Pifa, where he died in 1313.

The widow of Albert turned her whole thoughts towards revenging the death of her husband ; and, in this pursuit, involved the innocent no less than the guilty : for, all who had *any* connection with the assassins, suffered the same punishment, and were sacrificed with undistinguishing cruelty to the manes of the deceased emperor. Mean while the three cantons were left, for a short time, to the undisturbed enjoyment of their liberties, and to strengthen themselves against any future attack : and thus they innocently reaped the sole advantage which was derived from this assassination.

fame



same year the three cantons entered into a perpetual alliance, which was ratified at Brunnen: and this alliance is the grand foundation of the Helvetic confederacy. Such were the feeble beginnings of a league, which has since become so formidable by the accession of ten more cantons, and by the additional strength of its numerous allies; and it is remarkable, that Switzerland is the only country which, on the *one side*, has confined the limits of the German empire; and, on the *other*, has set bounds to the French monarchy, which the latter has never dared to transgress.

Schweitzerland, or, as we term it, Switzerland, originally comprehended only the three cantons of Uri, Schwitz, and Unterwalden, but that name was afterwards extended to all Helvetia. It derived that appellation either from the canton of Schwitz, as having particularly distinguished itself in the revolution of 1308, and also at the battle of Morgarten; or from the Austrians calling all those who inhabited these mountainous parts, by the general denomination of Schweitzers.

Switzerland was the rock which the house  
of

of Austria split upon, during more than a century. Blinded with resentment against their former subjects, and anxious to recover their lost domains in these parts; the several dukes led on in person considerable armies to subdue a nation, whose spirit was unconquerable; and to get possession of a country, which, from its situation, was easily defended by an handful of men against the most numerous troops. Within the period above mentioned, Austria neglected several opportunities of aggrandizing herself in other parts; and, slighting what was more feasible, bent her whole efforts to obtain what in its very nature was unattainable. The consequence of this mistaken policy, was, a continued succession of defeats, attended with a prodigious expence, and the loss of their bravest troops: until at length, convinced of their error, they totally relinquished an attempt, which had cost them so much fruitless blood and treasure. But although several emperors of that house occasionally made alliances with the Swiss cantons; yet it was not till the treaty of Westphalia that their independence was fully and finally

finally acknowledged, by Ferdinand III. and the whole empire.

The government of these three cantons is entirely democratical, and nearly the same. The supreme power resides in the people at large, who are, in each of these cantons, divided into several communities, from which are chosen equally the councils of regency. In the general assembly the Landamman, and the principal magistrates, are elected; and every burgher, at the age of fourteen in the canton of Uri; and of fifteen in Schwitz and Unterwalden; has a right to vote. The councils of regency of Uri and Schwitz consist each of sixty members, and reside at the capital burghs. In this council the executive power is vested, and from this body the principal magistrates are chosen. Unterwalden is divided into the inferior and superior valley; and each of these divisions has its own peculiar government and administration. Formerly the whole canton was under the same administration; but the two districts separated upon some dispute, and have since formed two distinct governments; which

which have each their general assembly, their Landamman, and their council of regency : but for the management of external affairs, there is a joint council formed of the two divisions.

These three cantons contain, including their subjects, nearly eighty thousand souls, and in case of necessity could furnish above twenty thousand militia. All the Catholic cantons enjoy considerable subsidies from France. Every burgher, of the age of fourteen, in the two cantons of Uri and Underwalden receives about six livres (five shillings of our money) annually ; the Landamman and the magistrates more in proportion. The canton of Schweitz has had for some time a quarrel with France ; and accordingly withdrew its troops from that service : but this year the matter has been accommodated ; and the king pays every male child of a burgher, four livres annually, reckoning from the time of his birth. I cannot help thinking, that the acceptance of these subsidies derogates in some measure from that spirit of absolute independence, which the cantons of Switzerland profess ; and that  
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it would be far more honourable to enter into an alliance with France upon terms of the most perfect equality, than to receive from that kingdom paltry subsidies, which give an air of venality to their several treaties.

The same kind of soil, and the same sort of productions, are common to the three cantons: the whole country being rugged and mountainous, consists chiefly of excellent pasture, but raises little corn, and has no vines. One cannot but observe with astonishment to what a degree of fertility they have improved a land, naturally the most barren, and for which they fought with as much zeal and intrepidity, as if they had been contending for the richest plains of Sicily or Asia Minor. In these little democratical states, sumptuary laws are not necessary; for, they scarcely know, even in idea, what luxury is. Such indeed is the purity, or (as some perhaps would call it) the austerity of morals, which still prevails among these people, as cannot easily be imagined by the inhabitants of great and opulent cities: and I cannot reflect on that affectionate

fectionate patriotism which so strongly attaches them to their country, without calling to mind that beautiful description of the Swiss peasant, in Goldsmith's Traveller :

*" Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,  
 " And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ;  
 " And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,  
 " Clings close and closer to the mother's breast ;  
 " So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,  
 " But bind him to his native mountains more."*

Every step we now advance is treading, as it were, upon sacred ground ; as monuments continually occur of those memorable battles, by which the Swiss rescued themselves from oppression, and secured the enjoyment of their invaluable freedom. I am now indeed in the very center of civil liberty ; would I could add of religious too ! but the church of Rome, exclusively, is established here ; and the people are in general bigotted, superstitious, and intolerant. It must be acknowledged, however, that this intolerant spirit is not wholly confined to the Catholic cantons ; for, in those where the Protestants prevail, Calvinism is alone ad-

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mitted: and thus a nation, who prides herself upon her freedom, denies the free exercise of religion to every other sect except that which predominates. Is not this striking at the first principle, and most valuable privilege, of genuine liberty?

Long as my letter already is, I cannot forbear mentioning, before I conclude it, a peculiar custom observed in some of these democratical states: every person who is chosen for a bailliage, or any office in the least lucrative, is obliged to pay a certain stipulated sum into the public fund. This practice is attended with one ill consequence at least; as the successful candidate is in some measure authorised to stretch his prerogatives, in order to make the most of the profits of his charge. Accordingly it is a general remark, that in the common bailliages the bailiffs appointed by the popular cantons are more apt to be guilty of exactions than those of the aristocratical.

I am, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER XII.

St. Gothard, August 9.

**S**WISSERLAND is a most delightful country, and merits the particular observation of the traveller, as well for the diversity of the several governments, as for the wonderful beauties of nature: but the impositions of the innkeepers, the difficulty of procuring horses, and the exorbitant price for the hire of them, are the taxes one must inevitably be subject to, for the enjoyment of these its *delights*. These little inconveniences, however, should be borne with patience and good-humour; and I will not trouble you with any splenetic complaints of those unpleasant circumstances which all travellers must necessarily meet with.

We quitted Altdorf after dinner, having with difficulty hired two horses, besides one for the baggage; we procured, however, another upon the road: so that what with riding and tying we got on very well. About nine miles from Altdorf, we began ascending. The road winds



continually along the steep sides of the mountains; and the Reufs in many places entirely fills up the bottom of the valley, which is very narrow: that river sometimes appeared several hundred yards below us; *here* rushing a considerable way through a forest of pines; *there* falling down in cascades, and losing itself in the valley. We passed it several times over bridges of a single arch, and beheld it tumbling under our feet in channels which it had forced through the solid rock; innumerable torrents roaring down the sides of the mountains; which were sometimes bare, sometimes finely wooded, with here and there some fantastic beeches hanging on the sides of the precipice, and half obscuring the river from our view. The darkness and solitude of the forests; the occasional liveliness and variety of the verdure; immense fragments of rock blended with enormous masses of ice, that had tumbled from the mountains above; rocks of an astonishing height piled upon one another, and shutting in the vale;—such are the sublime and magnificent scenes with which this romantic country abounds;

and which enchanted us beyond expression.

We set out this morning early from Wafen, a small village where we passed the night; and continued advancing for some way on a rugged ascent, through the same wild and beautiful tract of country, which I have just mentioned. We could scarce walk an hundred yards without crossing some of those torrents, that precipitated with violence from the tops of the mountains in different forms; the water clearer than chrystal. The road, exceedingly steep and craggy, is chiefly paved: in many places it is carried upon arches under a high mountain, and overhangs a deep precipice; the river roaring and foaming below. This being one of the great passages into Italy, we met a considerable number of pack-horses laden with merchandise: and as the road in particular parts is very narrow, it required some dexterity in the horses to pass one another without jostling. These roads, impending as they do over the precipice, cannot fail of inspiring terror to those travellers, who are unaccustomed to them;

and more particularly as the mules and horses have a singular method of going on. They do not keep in the middle of the track, but continue crossing from the side of the mountain towards the edge of the precipice, then turn aslant abruptly; and thus form, if I may so express myself, a constant zig-zag.

Thus far the valley of St. Gothard appeared to be well peopled; and we passed through several villages situated towards the bottom and less narrow part of the valley: the sides of the mountains were occasionally strewed thick with cottages; covered with forests; or enriched with pastures. Still continuing to ascend, the country a little beyond Wassen suddenly changed. It now became more wild and perfectly desert: there were no traces of any trees, except here and there a stubbed pine; the rocks were more bare, craggy, and impending; not the least sign of any habitation; and scarcely a blade of grass to be seen. We then came to a bridge thrown across a very deep chasm over the Reuss, which here forms a considerable cataract down the shagged sides of the mountain,

mountain, and over immense fragments of rock which it has undermined in its course. This bridge is called *Teufels-bruck*, or the devil's bridge; the common people always attributing works of any difficulty to the devil. As we stood upon the bridge admiring the cataract, we were covered with a kind of drizzling rain; the river throwing up the spray to a considerable height. These are sublime scenes of horror, of which those who have not been spectators, can form no idea: neither the powers of painting nor poetry can give an adequate image of them.

Not far from this wonderful landscape (the country still continuing solitary and desolate) the road led us into a subterraneous passage, of about eighty paces in length, cut through a rock of granite, which opened at the opposite entrance into the serene and cultivated valley of Urferen: the objects that presented themselves to us were, a village backed by an high mountain, on the sides of which was a wood of pines; peasants at work in the fields; cattle feeding in the meadows; and the river, which, when we last saw it,

loudly dashed over rude fragments of rock in a continual cataract, now flowed silently and smoothly along; while the sun, which had been hidden from us when we were in the deep valley, here shone forth in its full splendor. In general there is a regular gradation from extreme wildness to high cultivation; but here the transition was abrupt, and the change instantaneous: it was like the lifting up of a curtain, and had all the appearance of enchantment.

In this valley are four villages, Urseren, Hopital, Realp, and Zundorf; forming a small republic under the protection of the canton of Uri. The territory of this little commonwealth is about nine miles in length and two in breadth, and contains thirteen hundred souls. The people elect in their general assembly, their Talamman or chief, as also some other magistrates; and there is a permanent council of fifteen members, who meet alternately in the different districts. The inhabitants of this valley enjoy very great privileges; but the republic is not absolutely independent: for in civil causes an appeal lies from their courts of justice to Altdorf; and in criminal

minimal ones, although the trial is in the courts of the valley, and before the judges of the country ; yet two deputies from the government of Uri are present at the decision, and deliver in to the judges the opinion of the council of Altdorf.

Notwithstanding the considerable elevation of this valley, and the coldness of the air even at this season of the year, it produces excellent pasture. The only wood they have, is the small plantation of pines I just now mentioned, rising behind the village of Urseren, and which is preserved with uncommon care and reverence : in some parts indeed, along the banks of the Reufs, there is here and there a small quantity of brush-wood and stubbed willows ; but these do not supply the inhabitants with a thousandth part of the fuel necessary for consumption in this climate. In the adjacent country there are several mines of chrystal ; of which a considerable quantity is exported to Milan, as well from hence as from Altdorf. The language of the country still continues a kind of Swiss-German, but almost every person speaks Italian.

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The valley of Urseren is a small plain entirely surrounded on all sides by high and barren rocks, the tops whereof are covered with snow. This plain is commonly said to form the base of the mountain of St. Gothard; though the latter is more properly an enormous mountain, piled upon the shoulders of other mountains which rise rapidly from the lake of Lucerne. Near the middle of this beautiful plain we turned to the left, and again entered a valley filled with the ruins of broken mountains; the Reuss bursting through it with a most rapid and vehement torrent; on each side, immense shattered blocks of granite, of a beautiful greyish colour (and of which the summits of these alps are composed) confusedly piled together. It is about three leagues from Urseren to this place; and the ascent all the way as steep as a horse can well mount: but the road, considering the ruggedness of the rocks, is not so inconvenient as one might expect.

We are now lodged at a house inhabited by two Italian friars from the convent of Capuchins at Milan, who receive  
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all strangers that pass through these inhospitable regions ; where there is no other house for a considerable way. One of the friars is absent, so that I am in possession of his bedchamber : it is a snug little room, where a man may sleep very well without being an anchorite ; and which, after the fatigues of our journey, I enjoy with a satisfaction much too sensible to envy the luxury of a palace. Our host has just given us a dinner, consisting of delicious trout, (with which some of the lakes and the neighbouring torrents abound) eggs and milk, together with a desert composed of excellent butter and cheese ; both which were made in this dreary spot ; the pasture being peculiarly exquisite.

Upon our arrival we were rejoiced to find a good fire ; the weather being so exceedingly cold, that I, who was only clad in a thin camlet coat, came into the convent half frozen. It is singular to find, at the distance of only a day's journey, the climate so different from what it was at Altdorf : the air is absolutely in a freezing state ; and I just now passed by a boy at work, who was blowing his fingers to



warm them. If the cold be such in the midst of summer, how intolerably piercing must it prove in December? The snow begins to fall here the latter end of September; and the lakes about this spot are frozen during eight months in the year.

I am just returned from visiting the sources of the Tesin and the Reufs, which rise within two miles of each other. The former, in the state I saw it, flowed from under a mass of ice: but the friar who accompanied us, told me, that when the ice is melted, it is seen bursting from the rock: from thence it takes its course towards the south; is joined in its passage by several torrents; traverses the lake of Locarno, and part of the Milanese; and at length unites with the Po. The latter river issues from the lake Loacendro, which is about two miles in circumference; flows towards the north into the lake of Lucerne, and from thence throws itself into the Aar and the Rhine. It was in allusion to the different courses of these two rivers, that Mr. de Boufflers said, that from the top of the St. Gothard, a man might spit into the Ocean and the Mediterranean. These lakes

(of

(of which kind there are a considerable number in these parts) are equally deep in winter and summer, and always preserve the same level. They are probably formed by the melting of the snows, with which the circumjacent mountains are covered; although in several there is no appearance of their being supplied by any torrent. For, the snows thus melted, force themselves channels in the rocks; and, flowing through subterraneous passages, issue out at some distance: and by this means the true sources of these great bodies of water lie concealed. Within a day's journey is the source of the Rhine in the Grisons; and about the distance of three leagues, that of the Rhone in the Furca: which mountain we shall pass to-morrow. We are still surrounded by very high, rugged rocks, and inaccessible glaciers; so that our view is much confined: and though I walked above a league towards Italy, in hopes of having an extensive prospect of part of that delightful country, yet I could see nothing but rocks, precipices, and torrents.

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I am at this instant near seven thousand feet perpendicular above the level of the sea: no inconsiderable height, most certainly. Nevertheless, if I were to give credit to those, who assert, that this mountain is the highest point of Europe, I should raise myself in idea above twice as high: but I have reason to think, that this opinion is founded upon false calculations. Mikeli, who measured the principal mountains of Switzerland (but who is very inaccurate in his calculations) considers this as the highest of all; and he estimates its elevation above the sea as equal to 17,600 feet. But the truth is, St. Gothard, so far from being of that elevation, is by no means the highest mountain of Switzerland; and there is probably not one mountain, either in Europe, Asia, or Africa, of that height. According to general Pfiffner, the most elevated part of the St. Gothard rises above the sea 9,075 feet: an height considerably less than that of *Ætna*

According to Mr. de Saussure, the spot upon which the house of the Capuchin friars is built, is 1,061 French toises above the sea.

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and of Teneriff, and still more inferior to that of several in this great chain of alps, which separate Italy from Switzerland.

I am, &c.

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L E T T E R XIII.

Munster in the Vallais, August 11.

**I** Arrived here late yesterday evening; and so fatigued that I could not have written a line for any consideration whatsoever: but I am this morning quite refreshed with a comfortable sleep, and in spirits to continue my journal. I took leave of our host of St. Gothard, after having wished him a pleasant winter in that dreary situation; and walked on alone, for about two leagues, down the vale of St. Gothard. Indeed I frequently quit my company, and either go on before, or stay behind, that I may enjoy uninterrupted, and with a sort of melancholy pleasure, these sublime exhibitions of Nature in her most awful and tremendous forms. I entered the valley of Urseren at Hospital, and was again struck with the strong contrast

craft between that cultivated vale and the  
 desolate country I had just quitted. We  
 passed through the small village of Zun-  
 dorf; and stopt at that of Realp, to get  
 some refreshment, and bait our horses.  
 From thence we soon arrived at the ex-  
 tremity of the valley of Urseren; where  
 we began ascending a path so narrow, steep,  
 and rugged, that I could not forbear sus-  
 pecting we had missed our way, as it seemed  
 almost impracticable for horses: upon their  
 arrival however I mounted, being a little  
 fatigued with my walk from St. Gothard  
 to Realp. It was a single path, up a  
 steep mountain, where an horse, with some  
 dexterity, could just put one leg before  
 the other: and this path sometimes lay  
 upon the edge of a precipice, very craggy  
 and stony; where, if my steed had hap-  
 pened to stumble, we must both inevit-  
 ably have perished. But as I knew he  
 had no more fancy than myself to take a  
 roll down the precipice, I had nothing to  
 do but to trust entirely to his discretion,  
 fling the bridle upon his mane, and let  
 him pick out his own road. Nor had I  
 any reason to repent of my confidence:  
 for,

for, in the bad and dangerous parts of the roads, he never once tripped; where it was smother and safer indeed, he knew he had a licence to be more careless.

We came at length to a torrent, which we passed by means of a plank that was thrown across, after having got our horses over with some difficulty: a little way farther we arrived at another, deeper and more violent than the former, over which there was no bridge; not the least appearance of any track on the other side; a considerable distance from any habitation, and our guide unacquainted with the road. After some observation we discovered, that the mountain had lately fallen down, and had carried away the path; leaving only a very faint narrow track, that was broken off on the side of the precipice: along which my companions scrambled as well as they could upon their hands and knees. While I was crossing on horseback the torrent (which was filled with shattered fragments of rock) I heard a scream; and turning round, saw one of our servants seized with a panic on the very edge of the precipice, and vehemently exclaiming,

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that

that he could neither get backwards or forwards. Nevertheless, with some assistance, he got safe over ; declaring, at the same time, that he would take care never to put himself again in a similar situation. We now regained a kind of path, but so extremely difficult and dangerous, that we thought it most prudent to dismount, and leave the horses to make their way as well as they could. With much difficulty, and after having crossed several large drifts of ice and snow, the torrents at the same time rumbling under our feet ; we reached, by a very steep ascent, the summit of the valley. A number of rugged and forked rocks, piled one above another, have occasioned, it is said, this chain to be called the Mount *Furca*. The country immediately around us was more dreary and desolate than any we had yet seen, not excepting even the valley of St. Gothard ; all vegetation seemed to have ceased : lower down, the mountains were covered with herbage and sweet-scented flowers ; near us, but higher, on the left, lay a large body of ice, from which issued a torrent (probably one of the first sources of the Rhone)

Rhone) rushing towards the Vallais. In a word, the several majestic objects that presented themselves to our view, formed a scene inconceivably astonishing and sublime.

From hence we descended, scrambling down broken rocks and craggy precipices for a considerable way. By this time I was sufficiently tired, to be glad to sit down, and take some refreshment, consisting of bread, cheese, and hard eggs; the only provision we could procure at Realp. We were seated by a stream of clear water gliding along the side of the mountain; which indeed was so exceedingly steep, that our humble repast would have rolled away from us if it had not been well supported. In full view before us was the glacier of the Furca; an immense mass of ice, extending in the form of an amphitheatre between two rocks, more shagged, if possible, than any of the neighbouring mountains: it stretches from their feet, fills up the chasm between them, and reaches almost even with their summits. The sun shone directly upon it, and made it glisten like crystal; while the



blue tints, that were occasionally dispersed over the ice, appeared inexpressibly beautiful. The ice seemed to break in several parts, as we heard some loud and deep cracks; the torrent of the Rhone at the same time roaring beneath. That river is chiefly formed by this glacier: the small torrent, I mentioned above, which bursts out from the upper body of ice, is joined by several others; then loses itself under the vast arch of ice that forms the bottom of the glacier of the Furca; issues from thence considerably augmented, and is the great and principal source from whence this famous river takes its rise. The range of mountains on which we were sitting, were spread over with brush-wood and herbage; and some cattle were feeding along the heights: a fine contrast to the sterility of the opposite chain; which appeared, for some extent, nothing but bare and rugged rock, except where it was covered with ice and frozen snow.

After we had finished our banquet, and reposed ourselves for a short time, contemplating the singularity of the scene before us; we descended close to the bottom

tom of the glacier, where we admired the Rhone breaking forth with violence from the bed of ice, near the tremendous fragments of a fallen rock. We now followed the course of that river, and proceeded down a mountain so exceedingly steep, that the several parts of the road (which was there paved) winding along its sides, were frequently parallel to each other. The scenery of the vale, which we now entered, was of the same kind, but more sublime, if possible, than that of St. Gothard; the Rhone foaming along with amazing rapidity, as it falls in a continual cataract at the foot of some irregular alps of an immeasurable height. Indeed this cataract is the most considerable of any we have yet seen, except that of Schaffhausen. We travelled through this vale above two leagues, perpetually ascending or descending the rugged sides of rocks; one moment close to the river, and the next some hundred yards above it. The grandeur of these scenes continued with infinite variety for a considerable way; and (which added greatly to the magnificence and liveliness of the landscape) I

counted, in less than a quarter of a mile, twenty torrents at least, which we crossed. At first the rocks were either bare, or studded here and there with some straggling pines ; but as we advanced, they became more and more cloathed with wood and rich verdure : still no traces of any habitation ; and we had now gone at least fifteen miles, from our first quitting the valley of Urseren, without having seen even a shed. I was here so struck with the beauty of the forests through which we passed, and the luxuriance of the pasture, that I could not help expressing my astonishment that I saw no appearance of any habitation in these delightful spots. I had scarcely made the remark, when four or five hamlets, situated on the other side of the Rhone, upon a beautiful declivity, announced our approach to the Vallais. Not long afterwards, we unexpectedly came to an opening which gave us an extensive view of that rich and fertile country, with several villages here and there dispersed. In this very spot some peasant, either by a lucky hit of mere chance, or the happy choice of instinctive taste, has built

built his cottage. Here we quitted the bad road, and descended into the Val-lais.

We had proposed passing the night at Oberwald; and I was very glad to arrive there, after the fatigues of the day: but, upon enquiry, we found it could supply us with no refreshment. The master of a little hovel, which was called an inn, pointed to a large cheese, and told us That was all the provision he had; it was his bread, his fish, and his meat. Meeting with no better reception at Obergestlen, we continued on to Munster; where we did not arrive till late: here we found however an excellent inn for this country, which afforded us some good bread, and even some meat; but what was far more comfortable to me, a quiet room, and a clean bed.

As we are going to quit this country immediately, and propose returning into it by the Gemmi; I will defer giving you any account of the government until I shall be better informed.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R   X I V .

Spital upon the Grimsel, August 11.

**T**HE Vallaisans are remarkably attached to their liberty. Upon our quitting Munster, this morning, we walked on, and joined company with a peasant, with whom we had a long conversation. The countryman asked us how we liked the country; and, pointing to the mountains, said: "These are our bulwarks, and they are strong ones too; Constantinople is not so strongly fortified." This upper part of the Vallais, I should imagine, is not much frequented by travellers, if we may judge from the curiosity of the people, who all came out to gaze upon us; and when they discovered that we were Englishmen, they observed us with still more attention. But what particularly surprised us was, that the peasant above-mentioned, asked us, "How our war with the Americans went on?" It seemed indeed somewhat extraordinary, that a common peasant of the Vallais, should know there was such a place as Constantinople;

Constantinople; but it was more surprising still, that he should ever have heard of the present contest between Great Britain and her American Colonies.

After returning about a league the same way we came yesterday, through this fertile and well-cultivated country, we left the plain, and ascended the Grimsel; one of those alps which separate the Vallais from the canton of Berne. We were near four hours climbing up a steep and craggy road to the summit; and we should have considered the attempt to gain it as scarcely possible to succeed, had we not been encouraged by the experience of yesterday. We crossed the several shades of vegetation: in the valley, and the lower parts of the mountain, corn and rich meadows; then forests of larch and pine; next, short grass, together with several species of herbs, that afford exquisite pasture to the cattle; to these succeeded the various tribe of mosses; and then bare rock and snow. It would be curious to construct, or at least to imagine, a scale of vegetation, according to the idea of a French writer, whose name I have forgotten.

gotten. It would appear from thence, that excessive cold and excessive heat are equally pernicious. The tops of these high mountains are barren, and produce no plants; and at certain heights nothing but mosses will vegetate: the same is observed in climates where the heat is intolerable; as no other vegetable productions are seen in the burning sands of Africa. The *mosses* then, which support the cold better than other plants, would form the first degree of a scale adjusted to determine how far vegetation accords with the *temperature* of the atmosphere. The same family of plants, as it supports also the heat much better than any other, would occupy the last degree in the scale above-mentioned. Thus the two extremes touch one another surprisingly.

From the top of the Grimsel we descended about two miles, and arrived at a small plain or hollow in the midst of the mountains; containing one solitary hovel: and from this hovel I am now writing to you. It made so bad an appearance at first sight, that we concluded we should get nothing to eat; but we  
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were very agreeably disappointed ; as we have found in this desert spot all the accommodations we could wish for, except beds ; and these are the less necessary, after the sound sleep we had last night. Not to mention excellent cheese, butter, and milk (our ordinary fare) we got some good wine, a small portion of kid, and a boiled *marmote*, which we have just devoured ; although at another time we should have revolted at the very idea. The landlord is stationed in this forlorn region by the canton of Berne, and he resides in it about four months ; the roads being almost impassable the remaining eight : his business is to receive all travellers ; but upon condition, however, that they pay for their accommodations. When he quits the place, he leaves a certain quantity of cheese, hard bread, salted provision, and fuel, in case any unfortunate wanderer should happen to come this way, when the winter has set in : and we observed long poles fixed on both sides of the track, at small distances from each other, in order to point out the path to passengers, who may chance to pass this mountain after the  
 snows



snows have begun to fall. Near the house, upon the top of a small rock, our host has made a kind of little garden, by bringing some earth from the neighbouring pastures: and this small bit of ground supplies him tolerably well with turnips, cabbages, and some other vegetables; although, on account of the height of the circumjacent mountains, it does not long enjoy the warmth of the sun.

Numerous herds of goats are kept, during the summer months, upon these mountains: they are let out every morning to feed upon the rich pastures; and return every evening before sun-set to be milked and housed. It was a pleasing sight to observe them all marching homeward in the same herd; and following one another down the broken precipices, and along the rugged sides of the rocks: their milk is delicious.

This hovel (besides the storehouses for the cheeses, of which they make here a large quantity, and of a most excellent sort) contains only a small kitchen, and one room, in which we are now sitting. We occupy nearly one side of it; the other is taken up by our servants, the landlord  
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and his wife, and half a dozen honest labourers : the latter are eating their homely supper, with all the relish that well-earned hunger can give ; and are enjoying a short respite from their toil, with that noisy mirth which characterises the gaiety of this class of people.

The sources of the river Aar are in these mountains. Near our hovel are two lakes ; and farther on a larger one : from each of these flow cascades, that fall into the Aar, which rolls down in an impetuous torrent from the neighbouring glaciers. I walked by the side of that river while dinner was getting ready, searching for chrystals ; which are very common in these parts : we picked up pieces of divers colours, white, black, yellow, and green. Not far from hence are several very curious mines of chrystal : I regretted much that I had not time to visit them. These mountains certainly abound also in rich veins of gold, and other metals ; a considerable quantity of gold-dust being found in the bed of the Aar, and in the various torrents. I can conceive nothing more fatal to the interests of Swisserland, nor  
more

more repugnant to the liberties of the people, than to have these mines of gold or silver traced and opened. A sudden overflow of riches would effectually change and corrupt their manners : and it is an incontestable truth, that the real power of a country, not ambitious of making conquests, is derived less from the wealth than from the industry of its subjects ; the happiness of a people, as well as of an individual, consisting in being contented.

What a chaos of mountains are here heaped upon one another ! a dreary, desolate, but sublime appearance : it looks like the ruins and wreck of a world.

I am, &c.

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## L E T T E R XV.

Meyringen, August 12.

**I** Found the cold upon the Grimsel more piercing than I had experienced upon the top of St. Gothard ; and last night I suffered so much from it, as scarcely to sleep one minute. But then circumstances were somewhat different in the two lodgings :

ings : for at the Capuchin's I had a comfortable bed ; whereas last night I lay in the hay-loft, and could not get any covering : I declare my blood has hardly yet recovered its circulation. Take notice, this is the 12th of August.

We are now in the district of Hasli, which makes a part of the canton of Berne : it is enclosed on all sides by the mountains Grimsel, Wetterhorn, Shereckhorn, Brunig, &c. the highest alps of Switzerland ; and of these the Shereckhorn is the most elevated. We passed through an uninterrupted chain of alps, following the course of the Aar : all around us, for some way, was wild, and uninhabitable. The whole surface of what little vale there was between the ranges of mountains, was strewed thick with vast fragments of rock ; while those, which still hung on the sides of the mountains, seemed threatening to tumble upon our heads ; the river, the whole way, thundering along in a continual fall. This valley exhibits the same kind of scenes we have been long accustomed to ; except that the Aar rushes with more impetuous rage even than the Rhone

or

or the Reufs ; and is frequently so swelled with the torrents it receives in its course, as to ravage all the adjacent country : we saw many marks of these terrible devastations. We crossed it in several places ; in one of which the landscape was very much of the same dreary kind as that of the Devil's Bridge \*. Near the small village of Hundeck, about three leagues from Spital, we had a glimpse, through the trees, of the Aar falling from a considerable height. In order to gain a nearer view of it, we climbed along the sides of a rock, which happened very luckily to be well covered with moss, otherwise, from its steepness, it would not have been practicable : I leaned against a tree that hung over the precipice, and saw the river rushing all at once as if from a crevice of the rock, and then spreading into a kind of semicircular expansion in its descent. It fell with fury into a deep and narrow channel, and then lost itself in the midst of the forest. The river was very full, and its perpendicular fall, as far as I could judge by the eye, might be about 150 feet. The scenery also

\* See page 135.

was

was solemnly majestic ; the rocks on each side rising perpendicularly, and totally bare, except their tops, which were crowned with pines.

Great part of this land of Hasli is extremely fertile, and well wooded : we traversed in our way to Meyringen large forests of beech and pines, the Aar roaring along the vale ; and the road, which was as craggy and as rugged as usual, incessantly ascending and descending. We now passed through several small villages, which afforded us a pleasing sight, after the desolated country we had so lately been accustomed to ; and came into a beautiful little vale of a most lively verdure, and delightfully planted. All here was calmness and repose : neither rapid river nor roaring torrent to interrupt the unusual stillness and tranquillity of the scene. This short interval of silence, made us the more sensibly affected by the turbulence of the Aar and the loud clamour of the cataracts.

We have now seen the three greatest rivers in Swisserland (the Rhine excepted) issuing from their respective sources ; and

M

have

have traced them in all their violence through a tract of country, in which Nature has exhibited some of the grandest and most august of her works. But how impossible have I found it to convey to you an adequate idea of these her majestic, variegated, and astonishing scenes! They must all of them upon paper necessarily appear much the same: yet, in fact, every river and cataract, every rock, mountain, and precipice, are respectively distinguished from each other by an infinite diversity of modifications, and by all the possible forms of beauty, or magnificence; of sublimity, or horror. But these discriminating variations, though too visibly marked to escape even the least observing eye, elude every kind of representation, and defy the strongest powers both of the pen and the pencil. In a word, you must not judge of the beauties of this romantic country, from the faint sketches I have attempted to delineate: for, upon the whole, they can no more convey to you a complete and perfect idea of these wonderful scenes, than if I were to aim at giving

ing you some notion of the pictures of Raphael and Corregio, by telling you, they are composed of paint and canvas.

Meyringen is a large neat village, being the capital burgh of this land of Halli: a district which enjoys considerable privileges. There is no bailiff appointed by the government of Berne over any part of this territory, but the people are governed by their own magistrates: the former, however, as well as the latter, are obliged to take oaths of fidelity to the sovereign council of Berne. All the authority, which the bailiffs in the other parts of this canton enjoy, is possessed in a great measure by the Landamman; with this reserve, that he is subject to the inspection of the bailiff of Interlaken, to whom he delivers in his accounts. He resides here, and is appointed by the sovereign council from among the inhabitants; he continues in charge six years. All the other magistrates (except the judge and the secretary) are elected by the people, who assemble every four years. These privileges are the more remarkable in an aristocracy, like that of Berne, where the council of two



hundred are in possession of sovereign and unlimited power. In this district there are about 6,000 men capable of bearing arms, and about 20,000 souls.

The inhabitants are a very fine race of people : the men in general remarkably strong, lusty, and well made ; the women tall and handsome. The latter have an elegant manner of wearing their hair, which is commonly of a beautiful colour : it is parted from the top of the forehead, from thence brought round and joined to the locks behind ; which either hang down their back in long tresses, braided with ribbon, or are woven round the head in a simple plait. But the other part of the dress does not in the least correspond with this elegance ; as their shapes, naturally fine, are spoiled by an absurd fashion of wearing their petticoats so high, that they all appear as if they were round-shouldered and big-bellied.

Meyringen is situated near the Aar, in a very romantic valley ; surrounded by meadows of a most luxuriant verdure, sprinkled with cottages, which are occasionally separated from each other by huge  
intervening

intervening stones and deep channels, the remaining effects of storms and torrents. Close to the village, the Alp-bach, a torrent so called, falls from the mountain Housli, in two beautiful perpendicular cascades, but with so much violence, and in so large a body of water, as to cause frequent inundations: indeed the burgh itself has been in danger of being overwhelmed and destroyed by its repeated ravages; against which, however, it is now protected, by a wall of a considerable height and solidity. Near this torrent is another fall of water, that glides gently down the bare rock, which is there more sloping; and, farther on, a third glistened as it descended through a hanging grove of pines, that feather the sides of the mountain.

The following is the ordinary price of provisions throughout the mountainous parts of Switzerland: I have reduced the price to the value of our money.

	s.	d.
Butcher's meat, per pound	9	2 1/2
M 3		Bread

Bread	-	per pound	-	s, d.	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Butter	-	-	D°	-	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Cheese	-	-	D°	-	0 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Salt	-	-	D°	-	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Milk, per quart	-	-	-	-	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Worst wine, per D°	-	-	-	-	0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Pays de Vaud wine	-	-	-	-	0 6

By this you will perceive, that, in proportion, bread is much dearer than the other articles; and the reason is obvious: for, all these mountainous parts consist almost entirely of pasturages, and produce little corn. The peasants of Switzerland (I mean those who inhabit the mountainous districts) live chiefly upon milk, and what results from it, together with potatoes, which are here much cultivated. According to the price of provisions in England, the above list will appear exceedingly cheap: but then it ought at the same time to be considered, that money is very scarce in these parts. Nor indeed is it so much necessary in a country, where there is no luxury; where all the peasantry have, within themselves, more than sufficient for

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their

their own consumption ; and are tolerably well provided with every necessary of life from their own little demefnes. I had, to-day, a long conversation with one of the lads, who came with us from Altdorf, and takes care of the horses. He lives upon the mountains of Uri ; and, as their winter lasts near eight months of the year, during some part of which time there can be little communication between the several cottages, every family is of course obliged to lay in their provision for the whole winter. His own, it seems, consists of seven persons, and is provided with the following stores : seven cheeses, each weighing twenty-five pounds ; an hundred and eight pounds of hard bread, twenty-five baskets of potatoes, each weighing about forty pounds ; seven goats, and three cows, one of which they kill. The cows and horses (if they keep any) are fed with hay, and the goats with the boughs of firs, which, in a scarcity of hay, they give also to their other cattle. During this dreary season the family are employed in making linen, shirts, &c. sufficient for their own use : and, for this purpose, a

small patch of the little piece of ground belonging to every cottage, is generally sown with flax. The cultivation of the latter has been much attended to, and with increasing success, in these mountainous parts of Switzerland.

The houses (as I observed to you before, in my letters relating to Appenzel and Glaris) are generally built of wood; and it was a natural remark of one of our servants, as we passed through such a continued chain of rocks, That as there was stone enough to build all the cottages in the country, it was wonderful they should use nothing but wood for that purpose; a remark that has been made by many travellers. But it should seem, that these wooden houses are much sooner constructed, and are easily repaired; that they are built in so solid and compact a manner (the rooms small, and the ceilings low) as to be sufficiently warm even for so cold a climate. The chief objection to them arises from the danger of fire; as the flames must rage with great rapidity, and communicate easily from one to the other. This inconvenience, however, is in a great measure

measure obviated by the method of building their cottages apart; all their villages consisting of detached and scattered hamlets. But this observation does not hold with respect to some of their largest burghs: and these must consequently be exposed to the ravages of this most dreadful of all calamities,

I am, &c.

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## L E T T E R XVI.

Grindelwald, August 13.

**W**E left Meyringen this morning, crossed the Aar, and mounted the Scheideck through a beautiful forest of beech, poplars, mountain-ash, and pines. In our way we passed by the Reichenbach, a torrent celebrated for the beauty and impetuosity of its fall: it glides for some way down the sides of the mountain; then rushes perpendicularly into a deep gulph, which it has scooped for itself in a quarry of black marble; and from thence, after forming in its course several smaller cascades, flows into the Aar.

After

After ascending about three hours, we refreshed ourselves and our horses in a delightful vale strewed with hamlets; a sloping hill, adorned with variegated verdure, on one side; vast impending rocks, lifting their heads into the clouds, on the other; and a beautiful pyramidical mountain covered with snow, rising before us. As we were taking our repast, we were suddenly startled by a noise, like the sound of thunder; we soon found that it was occasioned by the falling of a large body of snow from the top of the mountain, which, in its precipitate descent had very much the appearance of a torrent of water reduced almost into spray. These *avalanches* (as they are called) are sometimes attended with the most fatal consequences: for, when they consist of enormous masses, they destroy every thing in their course; and there have been instances of their overwhelming even a whole village. The one we saw was very trifling; but it was sufficient however to give us some idea of those, which are more considerable. The best preservative against the effects of these *avalanches* being the forests, with which the

the alps of Switzerland so remarkably abundant; there is scarce a village, if situated at the foot of a mountain, but what is sheltered by one of them: and the inhabitants preserve them with peculiar reverence, as their common protector. Thus, what constitutes one of the principal beauties of the country, affords also the greatest security to the people.

The descent from hence to Grindelwald was long and tedious: that village, consisting of a number of cottages, scattered over the plain and upon the rising hills, exhibits a scene wonderfully agreeable and picturesque, heightened at the same time by a view of the glacier. The latter, stretching from the summit of the mountain to the extremity of the plain in a regular curve, is beautifully skirted with wood; and within a few paces of it, on each side, are fields of oats, barley, and rich meadows—but I am going to anticipate the description I purpose to give you upon a nearer view; and so good night.

August 14.

Dare I confess to you, that I am somewhat



what disappointed, and that a nearer view of the glacier has not sufficiently compensated for the fatigue and trouble of the expedition? But I have promised to write from my own feelings, and not to send you an account taken from the exaggerated descriptions of others. — We sallied out this morning full of impatience and expectation; and arrived at the bottom of the glacier, forming a vast majestic arch of ice; from whence issued a most loud torrent of snow-water just melted. This glacier is composed of an infinite number of pyramids rising from the bed of ice, which are more elevated towards the plain; being from about 40 to 60 feet high, and shortening as you ascend, until they terminate in a broad surface broken into deep and wide clefts. We were above two hours in mounting a very difficult path at the edge of the frozen region, occasionally passing over the steep and craggy parts of rock almost perpendicular, along the very sides of the precipice; the danger of which makes me shudder even now. This glacier, as we were informed, joins to a very extensive valley of ice, about 12 leagues in

in length, and situated between two chains of elevated alps.

After having ascended thus far, we were stopped by almost impassable mountains and a rising hill of ice; our guide (who by the way was very stupid, and did not seem to understand his profession) assuring us at the same time, that it was impossible to proceed any farther. Of this we were by no means convinced; but not having any conductor with us who could lead us the way, and not daring to explore these unknown regions by ourselves, we descended with heavy hearts; much chagrined, that what we had seen (though certainly a very curious and sublime sight) did not come up to what we had been taught to expect: and yet every one here, as well as our guide, assures us, that no travellers have penetrated farther. One reason, I believe, why this glacier is more particularly spoken of than others, is, that a very good view may be had of it without the trouble of ascending. In that part between the mountains, now occupied by this glacier, there was formerly a road which communicated with the Vallais, but

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is at present impassable; and we were shewn a spot, now covered with ice, where some years ago there stood a small chapel.

What peculiarly distinguishes the glacier I have been mentioning from that of the *Furca*, is, that the latter lies amidst barren and craggy rocks, in a most desolate, dreary, and uninhabited country; whereas this joins to a very fertile plain, and borders upon cultivation: in other respects the *Furca*, considered independently of its situation, was a more striking object. Not far from this glacier, pines, willows, ash, and oaks, grow and come to perfection; potatoes also, together with beans, beet-root, and turnips are here produced; and near the borders of the ice I gathered some strawberries and wild cherries, and observed hazel-nuts, barberries, and mulberry-trees. The valley of Grindelwald is extremely fertile; it produces barley, rye, hay, hemp; and fruit-trees in great abundance: above 2,000 head of large cattle, and near 3,000 of small are here fed.

It has frequently been observed, that on considerable elevations, and more particularly upon the glaciers, one finds a diffi-

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culty of breathing: a circumstance which has been imputed to the rarefaction of the air. This however was so far from being confirmed by our own experience, that I can venture to deny the fact. For in all our expeditions upon the Swiss alps, as well as in this of to-day upon the glacier, neither I nor any of the company ever felt the least difficulty of breathing; but on the contrary seemed to enjoy a more easy respiration: we all appeared more free in our motions, more light, and not in the least sensible of any inconvenience, except what arose from the piercing cold. Indeed in mounting the sides of a steep and craggy rock, the fatigue is so great that one is soon exhausted, and obliged to stop occasionally in order to take breath: but this is only the effect of violent exertion; and so far from being caused by the elevation, that we found the higher we ascended, the more we became refreshed. It is certain, that were this pretended difficulty of respiration produced by any subtlety of the air; that cause would at least act uniformly, and occasion the same effects on all considerable heights. But as we did not experience

perience these effects ; we may fairly conclude it to be an error advanced hastily by some travellers, and adopted by others who had never been out of the plain.

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XVII.

Lauterbrunnen, August 15.

THE road from Grindelwald to this place is singularly good, and we met, what to us is become a remarkable object, a cart in our way ; as we have not seen any thing that moves upon wheels since we left Lucerne. The country was most supremely delightful : beautiful hanging woods, immense rocks, deep precipices, and violent torrents. But I suppose you are by this time as much accustomed to rocks, precipices, and torrents, as the readers of Fingal to blue mists and hollow winds.

This vale of Lauterbrunnen, is inclosed between two chains of high perpendicular alps ; the highest of which, is called the *Jungfrau-born*, or the virgin's horn. The etymology usually given of this word, is,  
that

that it takes its name of *virgin*, from its top being inaccessible: but this circumstance is by no means peculiar to this particular mountain; and I much suspect that its appellation is derived from very high antiquity. For, it is a well-known fact, that mountains and promontories preserve their original names, while towns, and even tracts of country, frequently change theirs with new inhabitants. It is therefore from the former, as well as from the latter, that the antiquarian should endeavour to trace the antiquity of any country. It must however be confessed, that if these etymologies are not in some measure corroborated by collateral historical evidence, they are generally vague and uncertain; more calculated to display the ingenuity of the etymologist, than to throw any satisfactory light upon his researches. In short, it is only when history and etymology go hand in hand, that they serve to strengthen and support each other. It is thus that my very learned and worthy friend Mr. Bryant, in his late admirable performance, has rendered his etymological enquiries subservient to, and corroborated by, history; and

with so much clearness, as to carry the fullest conviction to his reader. Were he now with me, I am persuaded he would give me a much better etymology of the names of the Swiss mountains, than those which I have hitherto met with : such as the *Jungfrau-born* above-mentioned ; or that of the *Gemmi*, which is generally deduced from *Gemo*, to groan, because from its steepness the traveller groans as he ascends ; or from *Gemini*, because there are two rocks in that chain of mountains, which resemble each other. Whereas it is more probable, that the mountain in question was thus called, long before the existence of the Latin language.

We are now lodged at the house of the clergyman of Lauterbrunnen ; a little village, or rather collection of cottages sprinkled, like those of Grindelwald, about the valley and accessible parts of the hills. Near the house, is the celebrated fall of the *Staubbach*, which I am just returned from viewing. This torrent precipitates perpendicularly from a considerable height, and resolves itself into fine spray : the greatest part of it falls clear of the over-hanging mountain,

mountain, during its whole descent ; but the remainder dashes about half way against a projection from the rock, and flies off with inconceivable violence. The clergyman measured, a short time ago, the perpendicular height of this fall, and found it 930 feet. The sun shining full upon it, formed towards the bottom of the fall a miniature rainbow extremely bright : while I stood at some distance, the rainbow assumed a semicircular figure ; as I approached, the extreme points gradually coincided, and formed a complete circle of the most lively and brilliant colours. In order to have a still finer view, I ventured nearer and nearer ; the circle at the same time becoming smaller and smaller ; and as I stood quite under the fall, it suddenly disappeared. When I looked up to the torrent, in this situation, it resembled a cloud of dust : and from this circumstance indeed it takes its name ; *Staubbach* signifying, in the German language, a spring of dust. I paid for my curiosity, by getting wet to the skin ; but then I had the singular satisfaction, at the same time, of seeing a rainbow in miniature : no uncommon phenomenon.



non, you know, as it may be observed in any cascade, upon which the sun shines directly in a certain position. In the present instance, however, it was some consolation to me, that the object happened to be peculiarly striking. We are this instant going to set out for the Lauterbrunnen glaciers.

August 16.

We rode yesterday morning to the extremity of the vale, in which there are some points of view as fine as any I have yet seen in Swisserland. In our way we had a glimpse of a superior fall of the Staubbach, divided into two streams; which, afterwards uniting, form the second perpendicular cascade just mentioned. In this valley there are several fountains of the clearest water, that gush from the earth, and numberless torrents which precipitate themselves from the mountains; two in particular which fall from a greater height than even the Staubbach, but as their descent is not so direct, they are less beautiful.

The ascent to these glaciers is not altogether so dangerous as that at Grindelwald;

wald; though upon the whole, it is more steep and more fatiguing. After mounting above three hours, we arrived at a small hut, which in summer is inhabited by herdsmen, who make there most excellent cheeses, and have numerous herds of cows, goats, and swine. Here we feasted upon cold chamois, which our host had provided for us, not to mention a delicious desert of admirable cream and cheese. From hence we ascended still farther, with considerable difficulty, until we were surrounded by mountains, which we were told were absolutely impassable. We wished to proceed; but our host assured us, we had but just time to return before night; and that no strangers, except four of our countrymen, had ever gone so far. Here then we sat down close to the ice, and enjoyed a fine view of the glacier and mountains before us.

One of these mountains, the *Groß-born*, is pyramidical, and covered with frozen snow; another, the *Breit-born*, is conical, of a stupendous height, and crowned with an enormous mass of pure transparent ice, from which the reflection of the

sun's beams was inexpressibly beautiful. The hollows between these mountains were filled with a large body of ice, broken into the greatest variety of shapes imaginable; and several torrents (of which the Schmadibrunnen is the most considerable) bursting from the snow, and uniting in their course, form the Gletcher; a river which flows through the vale of Lauterbrunnen, receives the Staubbach, and falls into the Aar.

The whole scenery was exceedingly magnificent; and exhibited a most curious and singular picture, especially to one not accustomed to see ice and snow in the midst of summer, bordering upon verdant groves and rich meadows. But yet the ideas we had conceived of this wonderful landscape, from the exaggerated descriptions of others, have not been sufficiently answered; nor was it much worth the trouble of climbing so far, as we had almost as perfect a view of the glacier from the hut above-mentioned. Every thing in Switzerland has more than gratified our expectations, except the *glaciers*; and yet these are certainly the most sublime and the most interesting

interesting natural phænomena in the whole country. The truth is, from the accounts we had heard and read of them, our imaginations had been raised too high : and we were led to suppose, that what we had seen in the Furca was much inferior in extent or magnitude, to what we should see in these parts ; whereas in fact the latter was in all respects equal to whatever of the same kind we have since visited. I am apt, however, to believe, that our disappointment, in some measure, arose from the ignorance of our guides : and indeed I have no doubt, if it had been our good fortune to have been better conducted, we might, with some perseverance, have penetrated farther into the upper regions of these mountains ; and have found our most sanguine expectations in no respect disappointed.

The higher and more inaccessible parts of these alps, are inhabited by the *bouquetin* and the *chamois* ; whose activity in scouring along the steep and craggy rocks, and in leaping over the precipices, is by all accounts scarcely conceivable. The blood of both these animals is of so hot a nature, that the inhabitants of these mountains, who are

all of them subject to pleurifies, take a few drops of it, mixed with water, as a remedy for that disorder. The flesh of the chamois is much esteemed here; and to us it appeared delicious, seasoned as it was with hunger.

These mountains are covered to a considerable height with a rich and delightful verdure; and we saw upon their tops, at some distance, several little villages, the access to which must have been almost as difficult as to these glaciers.

Upon our return from our expedition, our host feasted us with a most excellent supper: among other articles, there was the best ham I ever tasted. The swine in these parts are uncommonly fat; in summer they feed entirely upon the grass and wild herbs they find on the mountains, and never taste any milk.

The clergyman and his wife, with whom we are lodged, are very singular characters; both of them immoderate talkers, but each strongly marked with good-nature and benevolence; and so very desirous to oblige, and to furnish us with every possible convenience, that their civility is absolutely embarrassing.

embarrassing. Indeed we were much concerned upon being informed, that the good woman, who is big with child, had sat up all night to make bread and cakes, and to prepare some other provision to carry with us in our excursion to the glacier: and, what was still more distressing, she would wait upon us at supper, notwithstanding all our entreaties to the contrary. This good couple have several children; and their circumstances cannot be very easy, as the livings in the canton of Berne are extremely moderate; and this is not one of the best. From this consideration, those travellers who are lodged in their house, always make them a handsome present, as a recompence for the trouble they have been the occasion of giving them.

I am now going to take a last look at the Staubbach, before I bid farewell to our honest hosts, and the vale of Lauterbrunnen.

I am, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XVIII.

Baths of Leuk, August 18.

**W**HEN we were upon the Lauterbrunnen glaciers, we were within three leagues of this place; but the mountains being, as we were informed, impassable, we were obliged to make a circuit of forty miles: I have no objection, however, to these round-about ways, as by that means we have an opportunity of seeing more of the sublime scenery of this wonderful country.

We had quitted the Aar at Meyringen, and now joined it again about two leagues from Lauterbrunnen, flowing through a fertile plain, which lies between the two lakes of Brienz and Thun, and issuing from the former. We followed its course until it entered the lake of Thun, so called from a town of that name, situated upon its north-western extremity. This lake is about four leagues long and one broad; and, if we may judge from the steepness of the mountains with which it is bounded, must be very deep: the borders are  
richly

richly variegated; and present several fine points of view, greatly heightened by some pyramidical rocks rising boldly from the edge of the water. We coasted this lake, through a delightful country, to the small village of Leisigen; mounted up to another called *Æschi*, from whence we looked down upon the whole lake of Thun, and part of the lake of Brienz, at a small distance; then entered the rich vale of Frutigen, parallel to that of Lauterbrunnen, and enjoyed, for a considerable way, a prospect of those glaciers we had visited the day before.

This vale ends at the town of Frutigen: from thence commences that of Kander, with a river of the same name running through it towards the lake of Thun, and bounded by an exceeding high mountain called Kandersteg. In all these vales, the rudeness and height of the mountains, which almost shut in upon them, contrasted with the beauty and fruitfulness of the plains, which are always watered by some lively torrent, form a thousand picturesque scenes, ever changing, and impossible to be described: and they are still  
farther



farther embellished by the number of ruined castles perched upon points seemingly inaccessible.

The road continued good as far as the small village of Kandersteg ; and from thence delicate travellers, who do not chuse to mount a rugged ascent, either on foot or on horseback, are carried in a kind of arm-chair placed by means of poles upon men's shoulders. We proceeded, however, on horseback, having before rode up steeper and more difficult paths. After having ascended above two hours, we came to a single house, not far from the top of the mountain, where we got some refreshment : here we saw nothing but immense rocks piled upon one another, with no appearance of vegetation ; and the weather was exceedingly cold. We then passed over a large drift of snow, and came to a lake called the Dauben See, about a league in circumference, supplied by a considerable torrent from a neighbouring glacier. This lake has no visible outlet ; but it evidently finds a passage under ground into the *Val-lais*, about six leagues off, as that current ceases to flow when the lake is frozen.

• This

This chain of mountains, which separates the canton of Berne from the Vallais, is called the Gemmi: from the point of which, over-looking and almost over-hanging the Vallais, we had at once a most extensive prospect of that country, and of the Savoy glaciers; but what principally attracted our admiration, was the *Mont Blanc*, rising above the rest in the most stately and majestic form. It is a conical mountain, of stupendous height; and seemed to have a glittering crown of pure ice upon its summit. The mountain which we descended, is in many places almost absolutely perpendicular; and yet a horse-road has been cut out of the hard rock down this very formidable descent. This road was begun in 1736, and finished in 1741, at the joint expence of the Vallais, and the canton of Berne: an astonishing work! and proves that nothing is impracticable to human industry. More than a league of the hard rock has been blown up with gunpowder, and a way formed which seems dangerous to those who are unused to mountainous countries, or whose heads are apt to turn giddy. It  
is

is about nine feet broad, and quite hangs over the precipice : in some parts, for a considerable space, it is a hollow way, open only at one side, the rock above projecting over it, of the same breadth, and in the same direction. The appearance is peculiarly singular : for, as the road winds continually, the scene also continually changes ; so that one moment we commanded an extensive view, and the next were totally inclosed with barren rock. From the beginning of the steep descent we all dismounted, and the horses were left to themselves ; it was somewhat curious to see them picking out their way, and frequently venturing to the very edge of the precipice to crop a straggling blade of grass.

The descent from the top to the plain, is about two leagues ; when you are arrived at the bottom, and look up, you cannot see the smallest traces of a road ; so that a stranger would hardly believe it possible that there really is one, until convinced by his own experience.

This place is famous for its hot medicinal springs ; and accordingly is much frequented

frequented by invalids of various kinds, during this season of the year: the patients either bathe or drink the waters. As far as I can judge from the accounts which I have received concerning their warmth, their analysis, the method of using them, and their efficacy in curing the gout, rheumatism, obstructions, cutaneous disorders, &c.; they seem nearly to resemble those of Bath. There are several springs, of different warmth and of different qualities: according to the most accurate experiments, the Mercury in Reaumur's thermometer stands at 42 degrees, when plunged into the warmest source. It is somewhat remarkable, that a stream of cold water issues from the ground within a few yards of this last-mentioned spring.

The accommodations for the company are very bad: each person having for his own use a small apartment not more than a few feet square; in which there is just room for a bed, a table, and two chairs. The public dining-room is, as you may suppose, upon rather a larger scale, as is also a kind of assembly-room, where the company,

company, who are very sociable, meet occasionally. Formerly the accommodations were tolerably good; but unfortunately, in 1719, an *avalanche* fell with such impetuosity from one of the neighbouring glaciers, upon the village, as to overwhelm the greatest part of the houses and the baths, and to destroy a considerable number of the inhabitants.

The company here, consisting of a large collection of persons from different quarters of Swisserland, are exceedingly affable and obliging: infomuch that several of them have invited us to their respective houses at Berne, Neuchatel, &c.; and this invitation was made with all that openness and unaffected frankness so peculiarly characteristic of the Swiss. Accordingly we propose profiting of their hospitable offers, fully persuaded, that by so doing, we shall give them an unfeigned pleasure: and indeed it is not difficult to distinguish an unmeaning invitation of mere formal civility, from one which is tendered with a real desire of being accepted. We dined this morning at eleven; the bell for supper is now ringing, and it is scarce seven.

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These are primitive hours : but we have travelling appetites ; and, provided we can but meet with refreshment, it matters little at what hour, or in what place.

You are now probably drinking tea in your withdrawing-room, from whence you are enjoying that beautiful prospect I have so often admired. The situation of this spot is far more romantic than that of Bath, and the waters perhaps are full as efficacious : yet this village contains only a few miserable houses, while Bath is one of the finest towns in Europe. I had a conversation to-day upon this topic, among others, with a very ingenious and well-informed gentleman of this country. I observed to him, that, considering the great credit and efficacy of these waters, I could not forbear wondering that the chiefs of the republic had not thought the improvement of the accommodations, an object worthy of their attention ; as the rendering them more convenient for the reception of invalids, would undoubtedly be the means of drawing hither a great number of strangers ; and consequently could not fail of being highly be-

neficial to the country. He assured me, it had more than once been in their contemplation : but that there were some persons of great credit and authority, who opposed it, upon a principle similar to the policy of Lycurgus ; as they thought that a concourse of strangers would only serve to introduce luxury among the inhabitants, and insensibly destroy that simplicity of manners, for which the *Vallaisans* are so remarkably distinguished.

How far the ignorance of a people contributes to their true felicity ? or how far a simplicity of manners may be corrupted by *national* improvement ? are questions, which have been much agitated ; and will never be decided, so long as it shall be held just reasoning to argue from the abuse to the use. But I should think, it will readily be allowed, that superstition is ever the companion of ignorance ; and that a people who are both ignorant and superstitious, must necessarily be benefited by an intercourse with nations more improved and enlightened than themselves.

Not far from hence, a communication  
has

has been made between this place and the village of Alpen, down a steep rock. Where the mountain inclines ever so little towards a slope, a foot-path has been cut ; but in those parts where the rock is directly perpendicular, ladders are placed, not unlike those by which one goes down into mines ; and upon these the peasants ascend and descend with heavy burdens upon their shoulders. I mention such circumstances as these, not as being objects in themselves so remarkable, perhaps, as they are represented by some travellers ; but as they will give you a stronger idea of the extreme ruggedness and singularity of the country.

I am, &c.

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## L E T T E R XIX.

Sion, August 19.

**I** BEGIN now to feel myself much less constrained in conversation than I have lately been ; as the people in this part of the Vallais all talk a kind of French patois : for, this town being nearly the



point, where the German patois terminates, and where the French begins ; the inhabitants consequently speak both languages. Nothing is more curious or interesting to those, who have entered into inquiries of this nature, than to observe the gradations of language : but as I own my ignorance in this branch of literature, I can only mention the simple fact.

We set out this morning at five, and came down a very steep valley to Leuk, a small town built upon an eminence near the Rhone : that river is here very rapid ; and, if we may judge by the breadth of its channel, often overflows its banks. We crossed it at this place, and continued for some way through a forest of firs, till we again passed the river to Sider : from thence along its banks to Sion, the capital of this *dixain*, and of the whole Vallais. This tract of country, called the Vallais, stretches from east to west about an hundred miles ; and is divided into the upper and lower Vallais. The former reaches from the eastern extremity to the river Morge, below Sion ; and the latter from that river to St. Gingol, situated upon

upon the lake of Geneva : the whole containing about 100,000 souls, all Catholics.

The upper district is sovereign of the lower, and is divided into seven independent dizains, or commonwealths ; six \* of which are democratical, and that of Sion aristocratical. The bishop of Sion was formerly absolute sovereign over the greatest part of the Vallais : at present his authority is extremely limited, and he is little more than a kind of nominal prince. However, all the public acts are issued out in his name ; he has the power of pardoning criminals ; and the money is coined in his name, and with the arms of the republic. He is styled prince of the German empire, and count or præfect of the Vallais.

The seven dizains or communities above-mentioned, form, conjointly with the bishop, one republic ; and all the general affairs are regulated in an assembly called Landsrath, or council of the country, which meets twice every year at Sion. This assembly consists of nine voices ; namely, the bishop, who has but one vote, the

\* The names of these six dizains are, Coms, Brieg, Raren, Visp, Leuk, and Sider.

lands-hauptmann, or chief of the republic, and each of the seven communities : and all their resolutions are decided by the majority. In this assembly the bishop presides, and the lands-hauptmann collects the votes. The latter is chosen or confirmed by this assembly every two years : and, upon the death of the bishop, the chapter of Sion choose four candidates from their own body, and out of these the assembly nominates. Each dizain, although it has but one vote, sends to this diet as many deputies as it pleases : they generally consist of four ;—a judge, a banneret, a captain, and a lieutenant. The judge and the lieutenant are appointed every two years ; the two others are for life. The democratical dizains are exceedingly jealous of their liberties, and very vigilant to prevent the deputies from gaining too great an influence. Accordingly, in each commonwealth, before the meeting of the diet, a general assembly of the people is summoned, in which every one of the age of fourteen has a vote : and instructions concerning all affairs of importance are by them given to their several deputies, which  
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the latter are obliged strictly to follow. By these means, the several votes in the general diet, do not depend upon the caprice or inclination of the deputies when assembled; but the matter is first laid before the particular assemblies of each commonwealth, and according to their decision the judge delivers in the vote.

In all causes of a certain importance, an appeal lies to this assembly in the last resort, from the inferior courts of justice in the several dizains, as well as from those of the bishop, and of the lands-hauptmann. Thus, by the institution of this supreme council, all the several communities in this country are firmly united, and form in conjunction one body politic, or republic, for the general affairs of the nation at large. In other cases, each of the commonwealths is governed by its own particular laws and customs: and the constitution of the six popular ones resembles in a great measure the little democratical cantons of Swisserland.

Both the upper and lower Vallais were formerly dependant upon the bishop of Sion; but the inhabitants of the two dis-

tricts united together in order to limit his power; and, having succeeded in the attempt, they quarrelled among themselves for the superiority. A bloody war ensued; which terminated, in 1475, by the total defeat of the lower Vallaisans. Since that period, they have continued subject to the others; enjoying however some very considerable privileges. The lower district is divided into six departments, over which bailiffs are appointed by the general assembly.

The republic of the Vallais is one of the allies of the thirteen cantons; and besides this general alliance, a particular treaty subsists between them and the seven Catholic cantons, for the defence of their common religion. They have entered likewise into treaties with France, and other powers, with a reserve however in all of them respecting their general alliance with the thirteen cantons of Switzerland.

The bishops of Sion had formerly a considerable influence over the political affairs of Switzerland; and Matthew Schanner, the cardinal bishop, is famous in history for his great abilities, his daring spirit

rit of intrigue, and his turbulent and restless ambition. It was entirely owing to his representations and influence, that the Swiss troops gave the only instance, perhaps, of infidelity to their public engagements, of which they were ever guilty; by breaking a treaty they had just concluded with Francis I. When that monarch marched into Italy to attack the Milanese, he endeavoured to gain over the Swiss; who having taken the duke of Milan under their protection, were the only obstacles to the progress of his arms. After much hesitation, they were at length prevailed upon, by the subsidies he offered, to enter into a treaty with him: but the alliance was no sooner concluded, than the cardinal of Sion persuaded them to break it, and continue the war. The Swiss historians however record, with triumph, the patriotic conduct of two of their officers upon this occasion; who, remonstrating against this breach of faith, drew off eight thousand of their troops; and returning with them to their country, in some measure retrieved the honour of their nation.

The remainder of the army, instigated  
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by the plausible and artful eloquence of the cardinal, attacked Francis I. near Marignano; which brought on one of the most furious and obstinate battles that was fought during the bloody wars of Italy. Night alone put a stop to the engagement, without separating the combatants; both armies remaining blended together upon the field of battle: Francis slept upon the carriage of a cannon, at no great distance from a battalion of the enemy. At day-break the Swiss renewed the charge with their usual courage, and were received with equal bravery. At length the intrepidity of the king, and the desperate valour of the French, rose superior to the furious and repeated attacks of the Swiss; and the latter retired in good order to Milan, leaving Francis in possession of the field of battle: an advantage, however, which he gained by the loss of the bravest of his troops.

The same cardinal of Sion (who always entertained the most inveterate enmity to the French) occasioned also, by his sole intrigues, the loss of the Milanese to Francis. Lautrec, in the year 1521, command-

ed a body of 12,000 Swifs, who formed the principal strength of his army. On the other fide, the cardinal had obtained, by his influence over his countrymen, a fecret levy of the like number, to join the army of the confederates: and thus, for the first time, the Swifs were feen combating under opposite banners, and ready to commit hostilities againft each other. Upon this occafion the cantons immediately difpatched meffengers, with peremp-tory orders for the Swifs in both armies, to return to their country. The cardinal bribed the meffengers to conceal thefe orders from the Swifs in the fervice of the confederates; and to deliver them only to thofe who were in the French army. The latter obeyed accordingly; and this defection fo weakened the army of Lautrec, that he was no longer able to make head againft the enemy: in confequence of which, Milan, and the principal towns, furrendered to the confederates.

The inhabitants of this part of the Val-lais, are very much fubject to *gaiters*, or large excrescences of flefh that grow from the throat, and often encrease to a moft enormous



enormous size : but, what is more extraordinary, idiocy also remarkably abounds among them. I saw many instances of both kinds as I passed through this town : of the latter, some few were basking in the sun with their tongues out, and their heads hanging down ; exhibiting the most affecting spectacle of intellectual imbecillity that can possibly be conceived. The causes which produce a greater frequency of these phenomena in this country than in any other, is a curious question, which very much excites my inquiry ; but I shall defer sending you my present opinion, until I shall have gained all the farther information in my power to procure.

The weather in this inclosed vale is exceedingly hot : I am at this instant, although it is late in the evening, scarcely able to bear the extreme fultrinefs. This languid heat is probably one of the causes, which occasion the inconceivable lazinefs and indolence of the inhabitants : although somewhat at the same time must be attributed to the richness of the soil ; which is so wonderfully fertile as almost to prevent labour, and spontaneously to produce the  
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fruits of the earth. In fact, the people assist nature very little : we passed several vineyards, in which the vines were suffered to trail upon the ground ; whereas, if at the expence of but little additional pains, the branches had been properly raised and supported, the owner would have been well rewarded by the superior quantity and quality of their produce.

The dirt and nastiness of the common people, is disgusting beyond all expression : of which I have had some unpleasant proofs from entering into several houses, as well in the town itself as on my way to it. I have just been holding a conversation upon this subject with my landlord ; who, though much the nastiest fellow I ever saw, was complaining of the uncleanness of the people ; and seemed to assign that circumstance as one cause of the *goiters*. This induced me to cast my eyes upon the person of my host with somewhat more attention, in order to discover how it stood with himself in that respect ; and I was rather disappointed to find that he proved an exception to his own remark. Let me not, however, be understood as insinuating that all the inhabitants

habitants in general are either goitrous, idiots, indolent, or dirty; like that traveller who asserted, that all the women of a certain town were crooked, red-haired, and pitted with the small-pox, because his landlady happened to be so. Indeed, I look upon national reflections in general, to proceed from the narrowest and most illiberal turn of mind: and I have always been cautious not to judge of the physical, or moral character of any people from a partial and superficial view. But as to the singular prevalency in the present instance, of the two natural defects I have mentioned; it is a fact which I can venture to affirm, both from my own experience, and from various conversations I have had with several men of learning and observation of this country: and with respect to the general dirtiness and indolence of the common people; it is too notorious to escape the observation of the most careless traveller.

Sion is situated near the Rhone, at the foot of two insulated mountains, that rise immediately from the plain: upon these are several palaces belonging to the bishop, particularly

particularly that called *Mayoria*, which is his principal residence, and where the general assembly is held. This town is very antient, and was formerly the capital of the Seduni, who inhabited this part of the country in the time of Julius Cæsar. There are still remaining some inscriptions that prove its antiquity; and, among others, so obliterated that I was not able to decypher them, I observed one which was more legible: it is in honour of the emperor Augustus, and was put up during his eleventh consulship. In this inscription the town is called *Civitas Sedunorum*.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R XX.

St. Maurice, August 20.

**A**T Sion we parted with our horses and guides, who had accompanied us from Altdorf; and procured a piece of luxury, to which we had been for some time unaccustomed; I mean a coach. But, notwithstanding the concentrated heat of the climate, and the great sultriness of the air,

air, I prefer riding or walking ; as by that means one enjoys a more unobstructed view of the country : and indeed the scenes are so beautiful, and so perpetually changing, that one's attention is called upon every moment by a variety of new objects that strongly demand admiration.

Upon entering the lower Vallais, I thought I perceived a greater appearance of industry than in the environs of Sion : and I am informed, that these people are not altogether so indolent as the latter \*. But as to dirt, they by no means yield to those of Sion.

We stopped at the village of Martinac, which, according to antiquarians, was the ancient *Oëtodurum*. It is said, that near this place may be traced the site of Sergius Galba's camp, one of Julius Cæsar's lieutenants, who was sent by that general to subdue the Veragri, the Pantuates, and the Seduni ;

\* This imputation of indolence will not hold good with respect to all the inhabitants of the upper Vallais : for in the eastern part of that district, which we entered after having crossed the Furca, the soil, though far inferior in richness and fertility, was much better cultivated ; and the people seemed more industrious

Seduni; the antient inhabitants of these districts. It seems evident indeed from Cæsar's description, in the third book of his commentaries, that *Oclodurum* could not be far from the present situation of Martinac; placed as it is in a small plain, encircled by high mountains, and divided by the small river Dranse, which falls not far from thence into the Rhone. I cannot however ascertain from my own observation, whether there are in fact any traces still remaining of a Roman encampment; nor could I get any information concerning it from the inhabitants: so that what I have mentioned is only upon the faith of antiquarians, and from the general position of the country.

Near Martinac we were much pleased with the majestic appearance of the ruins of an old castle, built upon the summit of a craggy rock, and hanging over the

dustrious than any we had yet seen in this country. Some physical reasons may be assigned for this difference: for, *there* the weather is not so sultry, the water is not unwholesome, and the air is remarkably salutary. Accordingly, upon our first entering the Vallais, we did not observe any of those goitrous persons or idiots, which struck us so much in the midland parts.

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torrent beneath : it was formerly a castle belonging to the bishop of Sion, and his principal residence. The road lies, from thence to St. Maurice, under a chain of rocks, with the Rhone flowing at a small distance through the midst of a rich vale. In our way we passed close to the *Pisse-Vache* ; a waterfall, that descends from the glacier above, but which seems to burst from the middle of the rock : I have seen higher falls, but none more beautiful. There is a cleft in the rock at top ; on each side of this opening are shrubs ; and from the midst of these shrubs, the torrent, rushing in a vast body of water with amazing violence, falls perpendicularly into the valley. These torrents are my great delight : but perhaps they recur a little too often in my letters to continue to be yours.

Towards the extremity of the lower Valais, the two chains of mountains that bound this country, approach towards the Rhone, which almost entirely fills up the space between them. In this spot is situated the town of St. Maurice, built almost totally upon the rock, at the foot of a range

of steep mountains, at a small distance from the river. Its antient appellation was *Aganum* : it takes that of St. Maurice from an abbey, erected in the beginning of the sixth century, by Sigismond king of Burgundy, in honour of a saint so called, who, it is pretended, suffered martyrdom in this place. This saint was the leader of the famous Theban legion, which consisting of above six thousand men, was massacred (as it is said) by order of the emperor Maximian, for not renouncing Christianity. Various have been the disputes concerning the authenticity of this history : for while some authors have treated it as a mere forgery ; others have contended for its being genuine, with as much warmth and zeal as if the truth of Christianity depended upon the decision. Without entering into the merits of the question, I cannot but remark, that the cause of Christianity has suffered more from weak and imprudent defenders, than from the sharpest attacks of its most inveterate adversaries. Indeed, the question concerning the number and sufferings of the martyrs, has occasioned much idle contro-



verly : for, reduce the popular accounts of both as low as probability can reasonably carry them, there will still remain sufficient evidence of the wonderful constancy and calm resolution of those primitive victims : and whether an hundred thousand, or only fifty, suffered for the cause of Christianity, it will equally stand upon the same firm and immoveable foundation. Nor is the inquiry more material concerning the motives that actuated their powerful and cruel adversaries. It matters not whether Decius ordered the Christians to be persecuted, because they had been favoured by his predecessor Philip, or from his attachment to the Pagan rites ; whether Maximin persecuted them from political motives ; Dioclesian as introducing innovations in his government ; or whether they were favoured by Constantine from conviction or from policy. For the truth of Christianity is in no respect affected either by the imprudence of its early professors (if with any they were justly chargeable) or the political reasons that influenced the conduct of those emperors towards them. But I am running into a digression ;

sion ; so it will be best to stop here, and bid you good night.

August 21.

A few Roman inscriptions, and those chiefly sepulchral, as also two antient columns, defaced and plaistered, together with the bridge over the Rhone, which still subsists entire, are the only visible marks remaining of the antiquity of this town. This is the chief entrance into the Vallais, and so wonderfully is this country fortified by nature, that a handful of men might defend it against a very considerable army.

To-day we made an excursion into the canton of Berne, in order to see the salt-works near Bex. We crossed the Rhone over the antient and beautiful stone-bridge, I have just mentioned, consisting of a single arch, and esteemed by the most judicious and best-informed antiquarians to be undoubtedly Roman. Half of this bridge belongs to the Vallais, and the remainder to the canton of Berne. From hence commences the bailliage of Aigle, which reaches to the Pays de Vaud, and was formerly, when under the dominion

of the house of Savoy, comprised within that district: at present it is classed under the German division of the canton, although the inhabitants talk French.

Upon our arrival at the salt-springs, I put on a workman's jacket, and went into the mountain about 3,000 feet, almost horizontally. The gallery is about eight feet high, and six broad, and as nicely hollowed as if it had been cut with a chissel: it is by far the most commodious subterraneous passage I ever entered. The salt is procured from some springs, which are found within a solid rock, perforated at a great expence: the richest source yields twelve pound of salt in an hundred weight of water, and the poorest but one pound in the same quantity. Near these are several warm springs, strongly impregnated with sulphur; some of which contain also a mixture of salt; and will flame if a lighted candle be put into the pipe through which they flow. Not far from the richest of the salt-springs, some pieces of rock-salt, in cubical forms, have been found; but the quantity hitherto discovered is so  
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very inconsiderable, that no advantage arises from it.

The water is conveyed by pipes to Be-vieux, where the salt is extracted. If the whole quantity of the impregnated water which contains so small a proportion of salt, were to be boiled immediately, and at once; the consumption of wood requisite for that purpose, would amount to a great expence. In order to save this cost, they make use of what is called a *graduation-bouffe*, constructed in the following manner:—It is a long building, open at the sides; *within* are ranged layers of faggots, piled up to a considerable height. The water in question is conveyed by pumps into reservoirs above, from whence it falls down upon the faggots, after having been resolved into rain by the current of air: in filtering through these faggots, it deposits a certain portion of its earthy and selenitical particles, and is received at bottom into other reservoirs; from whence it is pumped up again. This process is repeated as often as is found necessary: after which it is boiled, and the salt chryf-

talises upon the sides and at the bottom of the cauldron.

These salt-works, and those of Aigle, are the only ones in Switzerland: and they are of great consequence to this country; as it must otherwise depend entirely upon foreign nations for a supply of so essential an article. These works are supposed to bring in jointly a neat yearly profit to government, of above seventeen thousand pounds sterling: and they furnish nearly one third of the whole annual consumption of the canton. The remainder is procured chiefly from France, which is obliged by treaty to provide the Swiss states with this commodity at a moderate price: and indeed so high is the tax upon salt in that kingdom, that even the French salt is sold two thirds cheaper in Switzerland, than in many parts of France\*. The ordinary price of common salt throughout the canton, is at the rate of three half-pence per pound.

\* At Paris, where it is the dearest, a pound of salt is sold for about 13 sols, or about six-pence of our money: in some other parts of France, for instance in Franche Comté, a pound costs only 4 or 5 sols; but it is furnished to the Swiss at the rate of 2½ sols.

In our excursion to these mines, we passed through a most delightful country, richly variegated, and abounding in hanging groves of Spanish chestnuts, inexpressibly beautiful. I am, &c.

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## LETTER XXI.

Trient, August 22.

I AM now writing to you from the little village of Trient in the Vallais, on my way to the glaciers of Savoy. From the mountain of the Furca, its eastern boundary, two vast ranges of alps enclose the Vallais: the southern chain separates it from the Milanese, Piedmont, and part of Savoy; the northern divides it from the canton of Berne. These two chains, in their various windings, form several small valleys, through which a number of torrents rush into the Rhone, as it traverses the whole country from the Furca to St. Maurice. A country thus entirely enclosed within high alps, and consisting of plains, elevated valleys, and lofty mountains, must necessarily exhibit a great variety of situations,

tions, climates, and productions. Accordingly, the Vallais presents to the curious traveller a quick succession of prospects, as beautiful as they are diversified. Numberless vineyards; rich pasture-grounds covered with cattle; corn, flax, fruit-trees, and wild forests: and these occasionally bordered by naked rocks, the summits whereof are crowned with everlasting snow, and inaccessible glaciers. This strong and striking contrast between the pastoral and the sublime; the cultivated and the wild; cannot but affect the mind of an observer with the most pleasing emotions.

As to the productions of the Vallais, they must evidently vary in different parts, according to the great diversity of climates, by which this country is so peculiarly distinguished. It supplies more than sufficient wine and corn for the interior consumption: and indeed a considerable quantity of both are yearly exported; the soil in the midland and lower parts being exceedingly rich and fertile. In the plain, where the heat is collected and confined between the mountains, the harvest is so very forward, that it has already for some time been carried

ried in : whereas, in the more elevated parts, barley is the only grain that can be cultivated with any success ; and the crop is seldom cut before November. About Sion, the fig, the melon, and all the other fruits of Italy, ripen to perfection : in consequence of this singular variety of climates, I tasted in the same day (what in other parts is usually to be had only in gradual succession) strawberries, cherries, plumbs, pears, and grapes ; each of them the *natural* growth of the country.

With respect to manufactures ; there are none of any consequence : and indeed the general ignorance of the people is no less remarkable than their indolence ; so that they may be considered, in regard to knowledge and improvements, as some centuries behind the Swiss, who are certainly a very enlightened nation. The peasants seldom endeavour to meliorate those lands where the soil is originally bad ; nor to make the most of those, which are uncommonly fertile : having few wants, and being satisfied with the spontaneous gifts of nature, they enjoy her blessings without much considering in what manner to improve them.

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The beauties and varieties of this country you will find amply and faithfully delineated in that elegant letter of the *Nouvelle Heloise*, where St. Preux relates his excursion into the upper Vallais. As to the truth of the description he gives, in the same letter, of the manners of the people; I can hardly be supposed to be a competent judge, from the little time I have passed among them. But, as far as I have had an opportunity to observe and inquire; the picture, although in some parts not entirely devoid of resemblance, is, upon the whole, considerably heightened.

Before I take leave of the Vallais, you will probably expect, that, according to my promise, I should send you some informations concerning the causes which are supposed to occasion, or to contribute to render, goitrous persons and idiots so remarkably common in many parts of this country. I have indeed made all possible researches in order to gain some satisfactory intelligence upon so curious a subject; but I have the mortification to add, that the very faint lights I have been able to obtain, have left me almost as much in  
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the dark as I was before : you must rest contented therefore with mere conjectures.

I shall begin however with undoubted fact. The Vallaisans are not equally subject to the above infirmities, but those chiefly who live in or near the lower parts of the Vallais, as about Sider, Sion, Martinac, &c. The people in general are a robust and hardy race, as well those who dwell in the places last-mentioned, as those who inhabit the more mountainous parts of this country.

It is a common notion, that snow-water occasions goiters : but I have some reason to think the contrary. For, I have been at several places, where the inhabitants drink no other water than what they procure from those rivers and torrents, which descend from the glaciers ; and yet are not subject to this malady : indeed I have been assured, though I will not venture to answer for the truth of the assertion, that snow-water, so far from being a cause, is esteemed even a preventive. The air of the mountains is also a strong preservative against them ; and goiters have been known to diminish upon elevated situations ; whereas,

as, in the lower parts of the Vallais, if this excrescence once begins to shew itself, it always continues to encrease \*. Some districts are more particularly remarkable for this disorder than others : thus, in a little village, near Sion, almost all the inhabitants are goitrous.

From these facts it seems reasonable to conclude, that goiters are derived from certain local circumstances ; and that several causes, both physical and moral, may jointly contribute to their production. Among the physical ; bad water, and bad air, may, perhaps, be justly assigned, but chiefly the former ; which, near the particular districts above-mentioned, is stagnant, and loaded with particles of *tufa*. The torrents also, which are formed by the melting of the snows, dissolve this substance, or similar ones, in their passage : and probably this circumstance has given rise to the notion, that snow-water, simply in itself, occasions these goiters ; but wherever it has that effect, it is strongly impregnated with

\* This difference, however, may be occasioned by the different quality of the water, as well as by the superior purity of the air.

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certain stony particles. I was shown several pools of these stagnant waters, which I should have supposed no human being to have been capable of drinking. Among the moral causes, which may be supposed to concur in occasioning these guttural protuberances; the inconceivable laziness and negligence of these people, may be mentioned. For, they rarely take the least precaution to guard against, or to remedy, the ill effects of their unwholesome water: indolently acquiescing in its consequences, they use no sort of means either to prevent or remove them.

The same causes, which seem to produce the goiters, probably operate in the case of idiots: for, wherever in this country the former abound, the latter are also in great numbers. Such indeed is the nice and inexplicable connection between our bodies and our minds, that the one ever sympathises with the other: we see that the body suffers, whenever the mind is deeply affected by any strong impression of melancholy and distress; and, in return, that whenever the corporeal frame is impaired and shattered by long pain and sickness,

ness, the understanding also is equally out of order. Hence it is by no means an ill-grounded conjecture, that in the case before us, the same causes which affect the body should also affect the mind ; or, in other words, that the same waters, &c. which create obstructions, and goiters, should also occasion mental imbecillity and disarrangement. But, in conjunction with causes of a physical nature, there is a moral one likewise to be taken into the account : for the children of the common people are totally neglected by their parents ; and, with no more education than the meanest brutes, are, like those, suffered to wallow in the dirt, and to eat and drink whatever comes in their way.

I saw several idiots with goiters ; but I do not mean to draw any certain conclusion from that circumstance. For, though in general they are the children of goitrous parents, and have frequently those swellings themselves ; yet the contrary often happens : and they are sometimes the offspring even of healthy parents, whose other children are all properly organized. So that, it seems, the causes above-mention-

ed operate more or less upon some constitutions than upon others ; as indeed is observable in all epidemical disorders whatsoever \*.

I was informed at Sion, that the number, both of goitrous persons, and of idiots, have considerably decreased within these few years ; and two reasons were assigned : one is, the laudable care which the magistrates have taken to dry up the stagnant waters in the neighbourhood ; and the other, the custom which now generally pre-

\* I was told by a physician of the Vallais, that children are sometimes *born* with goiters ; and I saw several, scarce ten years old, who had very large ones. These swellings, when they encrease to a considerable magnitude, check respiration, and render those who have them exceedingly languid and indolent. During my expedition through the Vallais, I observed some of all proportions, from the size of a walnut to the bigness of a peck loaf.

The species of idiots I have mentioned above, and who are deemed by many authors as peculiar to the Vallais, are called *cretins*. Among these I also observed a kind of sensible gradation : namely, from those who, being totally deaf and dumb, and incapable of helping themselves, give no proof of their existence, but the mere animal sensations ; to others, who are a little more animated, and possess some faint dawning of reason.

vails of sending the children to the mountains ; by which means they escape the bad effects of the unwholesome air and water.

It is to be presumed, that a people accustomed to see these excrescences daily, will not be at all shocked at their deformity ; but I do not find, as some writers assert, that they consider them as beauties : I cannot believe that a Vallaisan poet would venture to address a copy of verses to his mistress in praise of her goiter. To judge by the accounts of some travellers, one might suppose, that all these people, without exception, were gifted with the above appendage : whereas, in fact, as I have before remarked, the Vallaisans, in general, are a robust hardy race of people ; and all that with truth can be affirmed, is, that goitrous persons, and idiots, are more abundant here than perhaps in any other part of the globe.

It has been asserted also by some, that the people very much respect these idiots, and even consider them as blessings from Heaven ; an assertion which is as strongly contradicted by others. I made many inquiries in order to get at the truth of this matter.

matter. Upon my questioning some gentlemen of this country, whom I met at the baths of Leuk, they treated the notion as absurd and false: but whether they spoke their real sentiments, or were unwilling to confirm what they thought might lower their countrymen in the opinion of a stranger, will admit perhaps of some doubt. For I have, since that time, repeatedly enquired among the lower sort, and am convinced, that the common people esteem them as blessings. They call them "Souls of God, without sin:" and there are many parents who prefer these idiot-children to those whose understandings are perfect; because, as they are incapable of intentional criminality, they consider them as more certain than the others of happiness in a future state. Nor is this opinion entirely without some good effect; as it disposes the parents to pay the greater attention to those unhappy beings, who are incapable of taking care of themselves. These idiots are suffered to marry, as well among themselves as with others; and thus the breed is, in

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some measure, prevented from becoming extinct \*. I am, &c.

## LETTER

\* Since I wrote the above letter, I have met with an account of these Cretins in the “*Recherches Philosophiques sur les Americains.*” The ingenious author compares them with the *blafards* of the isthmus of Darien; a species of beings who resemble the white negroes. He refers to a memoir written expressly upon these *Cretins*, by the count of Mogiron, and read to the Royal Society of Lyons: I am sorry that I have not been able to procure this memoir; because, from the character given of it by the author of the *Recherches Philosophiques*, it must contain some very curious remarks. I shall here subjoin his account of the Cretins, as being, in many respects, more ample than mine; premising, at the same time, that it by no means appears these *Cretins* are universally *goitrous*.

“ On ne sauroit mieux comparer les Blafards quant a leurs facultés, à leur degeneration, et à leur état, qu’aux *Cretins* qu’on voit en assez grand nombre dans le Valais, et principalement à Sion capitale de ce pays: ils sont sourds, muets, presque insensibles aux coups, et portent des goîtres prodigieux qui leur descendent jusqu’ à la ceinture: ils sont ni furieux ni malfaisants, quoiqu’absolument ineptes et incapables de penser; ils n’ont qu’une sorte d’attrait assez violent pour leurs besoins physiques, et s’abandonnent aux plaisirs de sens de toute espee sans y soupçonner aucune crime, aucune indécence. Les habitans du Valais regardent ces Crétins comme les anges tutélaires des familles, comme des saints: on ne les contrarie jamais,

## L. E T T E R XXII.

Geneva, August 28.

**U**PON quitting Trient, we went along  
some narrow vallies through forests  
of pines by the side of the torrent of Tri-  
ent ;

jamais, on les soigne avec assiduité, on n'oublie rien pour les amuser, et pour satisfaire leurs goûts et leurs appetits ; les enfans n'osent les insulter, et les vieillards les respectent. Ils ont la peau très livide et naissent Crétins, c'est-à-dire aussi stupides, aussi simples qu'il est possible de l'être : les années n'apportent aucun changement à leur état d'abrutissement : ils y persistent jusqu'à la mort, et on ne connoit point de remède capable de les tirer de cet assoupissement de la raison, et de cette défaillance du corps et de l'esprit. Il y en a des deux sexes, et on les honore également, soit qu'ils soient hommes ou femmes. Le respect qu'on porte à ces personnes atteintes du Crétinisme, est fondé sur leur innocence et leur foiblesse : ils ne sauroient pécher, parce qu'ils ne distinguent le vice de la vertu ; ils ne sauroient nuire, parce qu'ils manquent de force, de vaillance, ou d'envie ; et c'est justement le cas des Blafards, dont la stupidité est aussi grande que celle des Crétins."

In another part he says, " Mr. De Maugiron attribue les causes du Crétinisme des Vallaisans à la malpropreté, à l'éducation, aux chaleurs excessives des vallées, aux eaux, et aux goîtres qui sont communs à tous les

ent ; and soon afterwards entered the valley of Orfina, which led us to the small village of that name : a little way from Trient we entered the dutchy of Faucigny, which belongs to the king of Sardinia. Our road was very rugged, till we arrived at the vale of Chamouny ; the great mountains and glaciers of Savoy rising majestically before us.

There are five glaciers, which extend almost to the plain of the vale of Chamouny, and are separated by wild forests, corn-fields, and rich meadows : so that immense tracts of ice are blended with the highest cultivation, and perpetually succeed to each other in the most singular and striking vicissitude. All these several vallies of ice, which lie chiefly in the hollows of the mountains, and are some leagues in length, unite together at the foot of Mont Blanc ; the highest mountain in Europe, and probably of the antient world.

enfants de ce pays ; mais il y existe probablement une autre cause spécifique, que l'on sera plus à portée de connoître quand on sera parvenu à obtenir la permission de disséquer un de ces Cretins."

See *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains, &c.*  
Par Mr. De P——, *Quatrième Partie. Section I.*

According to the calculations of Mr. De Luc, (by whose improvement of the barometer, elevations are taken with a degree of accuracy before unattainable,) the height of this mountain above the level of the sea is  $2391 \frac{1}{2}$  French toises. Mr. de Saussure, professor of natural philosophy at Geneva, has made use of the above barometer in measuring the elevation of several very considerable mountains. This great improvement of the barometer marks a distinguished æra in the history of natural philosophy; as, before it was rectified by that ingenious naturalist Mr. de Luc, its uncertainty was so great, that there was no relying upon the mensurations, which had been taken by that instrument \*.

I am

\* It was by this means that Mr. de Luc found the altitude of the glacier of *Buet*; and from thence he took geometrically the elevation of *Mont Blanc* above the *Buet*. The labours of this celebrated naturalist, and his rules for computing heights by the barometer, are to be found in his very valuable treatise "*Sur les Modifications de l'Atmosphère*." These rules are explained, and his tables reduced to English measure, by Dr. Maskelyne, R. A.; and still more fully by Dr. Horsley, secretary to the Royal Society: both these

Perhaps in no instance has the imagination of man been more given to amplification, than in ascertaining the heights of mountains. I have been considerably amused to-day with considering this article in Gruner's description of the Swiss glaciers. In one of the chapters, he has given the altitude of some of the most remarkable mountains of the globe, agreeably to the calculations of several famous geographers and travellers, both antient and modern :

According to Strabo, the highest	} Toises.	
mountain of the antient world		
was about - - -		3,411
According to Riccioli - - -		58,216
According to Father Kircher, who took the elevations of mountains by the uncertain method of measuring their shadows,		
Ætna is - - - - -		4,000
The Pike of Teneriff - - -		10,000
Mount Athos - - - - -		20,000
Lariffa in Egypt - - - -		28,000

standard. Probably the *Schreckhorn* will be found to be the highest mountain of the old world, excepting *Mont Blanc*.

But

But these several calculations are evidently so extravagant, that their exaggeration cannot but strike the most common observer. If we consult the more \* modern and rational accounts ; it appears, that the Pike of Teneriff and *Ætna* have been frequently supposed to be the highest mountains of the globe. The former is estimated by some natural philosophers, to be 3,000 toises above the level of the sea ; but as

\* In order to determine with absolute certainty that *Mont Blanc* is the highest point of the old world, it would be necessary to estimate, by the same mode of mensuration, *Mont Blanc*, the *Schereckhorn*, the Pike of Teneriff, the mountains of the Moon in Africa, the *Taurus*, and the *Caucasus*.

The latter have long been deemed the highest mountains of Asia ; and some philosophers, upon considering the great superiority, which the eastern rivers have over the European, both in depth and breadth, have drawn from thence a presumptive argument, that the Asiatic mountains are much more elevated than those of Europe. But conjectures are now banished from natural philosophy : and, till some person of sufficient ability shall shew from undoubted calculations, that the highest part of the *Caucasus* rises more than 15,000 feet above the level of the sea, *Mont Blanc* may be fairly considered as more elevated.

N. B. Throughout the text I have made use of the French toise, consisting of six French feet.

ording

According to Feuillée, this elevation is reduced to 2,070 toises ; (and this measurement too is probably somewhat beyond the truth) whereas *Ætna*, by the accurate computations of Mr. De Saussure, rises only \* 1672 toises above the sea. So that from these observations, as well as from those which

\* About 10,660 English feet. According to Sir George Schuckborough, 10,954 : who says, " I have ventured to compute the height of this celebrated mountain from my own tables, though from an observation of Mr. De Saussure, in 1773, which that gentleman obligingly communicated to me. It will serve to shew that this volcano is by no means the highest mountain of the old world ; and that Vesuvius, placed upon mount *Ætna*, would not be equal to the height of Mont Blanc, which I take to be the most elevated point in Europe, Asia, and Africa."

I am happy to find my conjectures corroborated by that ingenious and accurate observer.

	Feet.
Height of <i>Ætna</i> , according to Sir George	10,954
Of Vesuvius, according to Mr. De Saussure	3,900
Of both together - - - - -	14,854
Height of Mont Blanc, according to Sir George	15,662
Difference,—or the height of Mont Blanc above that of <i>Ætna</i> and Vesuvius taken together - - - - -	808

have

have been made by other travellers, whose skill may be depended upon, it will appear that there are few mountains, except those in America, (the elevation whereof reaches, according to Condamine, to above 3,000 toises) which are equal in height to *Mont Blanc*.

The access to *Mont Blanc* has been hitherto found impracticable. About two months ago four inhabitants of Chamouny attempted to reach it; and set out from that village at ten in the evening. After above fourteen hours most violent fatigue, employed in mounting rugged and dangerous ascents, in crossing several vallies of ice, and large plains of snow, which was in some parts so loose, that they sunk in it down to the waist; they found themselves upon the summit next to *Mont Blanc*. At first sight, it appeared scarcely a league distant; however, they soon discovered that the clearness of the air, the extraordinary whiteness of the snow, and the height of that mountain, made it seem nearer than it was in reality: and, they perceived with regret, that it would require at least four hours more to arrive  
at



at it, even supposing it were practicable. But as the day was now far advanced, and the vapours towards the summit of Mont Blanc began to gather into clouds; they were obliged to return without having accomplished their enterprize. They had no time to lose: and as they were returning in great haste, one of the party slipped down in attempting to leap over a chasm of ice. He had in his hand a long pole, spiked with iron, which he had struck into the ice on the other side of the opening; and upon this he hung dreadfully suspended for a few moments, until he was taken out by his companions. The danger he had just escaped, made such an impression upon him, that he fainted away; and continued for some time in that situation: he was at length, however, brought to himself, and, though considerably bruised, he sufficiently recovered to be able to go on. They did not arrive at Chamouny till eight that evening, after having passed two and twenty hours of inconceivable fatigue, and being more than once in danger of losing their lives in those desolate regions; but,

as

as some sort of recompence for so much danger and fatigue, they have the satisfaction, at least, to boast of having approached nearer to Mont Blanc than any former adventurers \*.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R XXIII.

Geneva, August 30.

**A**UGUST 23d, (the day of our arrival at Chamouny) we mounted by the side of the glacier of Bossion, in order to see *les Murailles de glace*, so called from their resemblance to walls: they consist of

\* According to Sir George Schuckborough, the summit to which they arrived, is more than 13,000 feet above the Mediterranean. These persons however do not seem to have taken sufficient precautions for so perilous an enterprize: for the expedition was not only hazardous to a great degree, but it was also too fatiguing and too difficult to be accomplished within twenty-four hours. They ought to have set out in the morning; to have taken furs with them; and, if possible, to have found some proper place in which to have passed the night. If that could have been accomplished, and if by any means they could have guarded

of large ranges of ice of prodigious thickness and solidity, rising abruptly from their base, and parallel to each other. Some of these ranges appeared to us about an hundred and fifty feet high; but, if we may believe our guides, they are four hundred feet above their real base. Near them were pyramids and cones of ice of all forms and sizes, shooting up to a very considerable height, in the most beautiful and fantastic shapes imaginable. From this glacier, which we crossed without much difficulty, we had a fine view of the vale of Chamouny.

The 24th. We had proposed sallying forth this morning very early, in order to go to the valley of ice, in the glacier of

guarded themselves against the piercing cold, they would have been sufficiently refreshed the next morning to pursue their expedition; and would not have found themselves, after advancing within four hours of Mont Blanc, so fatigued and terrified as to be unable to proceed; nor the day so far spent, that, had they gone on, they must have been overtaken by darkness, and would probably have either fallen down one of the precipices, or have perished with cold.

See an account of this expedition in *Description des aspects du Mont Blanc*, by Mr. Bourrit.

Montenvert, and to penetrate as far as the time would admit; but the weather proving cloudy, and likely to rain, we deferred setting out till nine, when appearances gave us the hope of its clearing up. Accordingly we procured three excellent guides, and ascended on horse-back some part of the way over the mountain which leads to the glacier above-mentioned: we were then obliged to dismount, and scrambled up the rest of the mountains (chiefly covered with pines) along a steep and rugged path, called "the road of the *chrysal-hunters*." From the summit of the Montenvert we descended a little to the edge of the glacier; and made a refreshing meal upon some cold provision which we brought with us. A large block of granite, called "*La pierre des Anglois*," served us for a table; and near us was a miserable hovel, where those, who make expeditions towards Mont Blanc, frequently pass the night. The scene around us was magnificent and sublime; numberless rocks rising boldly above the clouds, some of whose tops were bare, others covered with snow. Many of these

R

gradually

gradually diminishing towards their summits, end in sharp points : and from this circumstance they are called the *Needles* \*. Between these rocks the valley of ice stretches several leagues in length, and is nearly a mile broad ; extending on one side towards Mont Blanc, and, on the other, towards the plain of Chamouny.

After we had sufficiently refreshed ourselves, we prepared for our adventure across the ice. We had each of us a long pole, spiked with iron ; and, in order to secure us as much as possible from slipping, the guides fastened to our shoes *crampons*, consisting of a small bar of iron, to which are fixed four small spikes of the same metal. The difficulty of crossing these valleys of ice, arises from the immense chasms. They are produced by several causes ; but more particularly by the continual melting of the interior surface :

\* The names of the principal ones are Aiguille de Dreux, Aiguille de Moine, Aiguille de Tacul, Aiguille de Charmeaux : and those of the five glaciers, that stretch towards the plain of Chamouny, and unite at the foot of Mont Blanc, are Tacoua, Bonson, Montpervet, Argentières, and Tour.

this frequently occasions a sinking of the ice, and under such circumstances, the whole mass is suddenly rent asunder in that particular place with a most violent explosion. We rolled down large stones into several of them; and the great length of time before they reached the bottom, gave us some conception of their depth: our guides assured us, that in some places they are five hundred feet deep. I can no otherwise convey to you an image of this immense body of ice, consisting of continued irregular ridges and deep chasms, than by resembling it to a raging sea, that had been instantaneously frozen in the midst of a violent storm.

We began our walk with great slowness and deliberation, but we gradually gained more courage and confidence as we advanced; and we soon found that we could safely pass along those parts, where the ascent and descent were not very considerable, much faster even than when walking at the rate of our common pace: in other parts we leaped over the clefts, and slid down the steeper descents as well as we could. In one place, where we descended

and stepped across an opening upon a narrow ridge of ice scarcely three inches broad ; we were obliged to tread with peculiar caution : for, on each side were chasms of a great depth. We walked some paces sideways along this ridge, stepped across the chasm into a little hollow, which the guides made on purpose for our feet ; and got up an ascent by means of small holes which we made with the spikes of our poles. All this sounds terrible ; but at the time we had none of us the least apprehensions of danger, as the guides were exceedingly careful, and took excellent precautions. One of our servants had the courage to follow us without *crampons*, and with no nails to his shoes ; which was certainly dangerous, on account of the slipperiness of the leather when wetted. He got along however surprisingly well ; though in some places we were alarmed, lest he should slip upon the edge of one of those chasms : for had that accident happened to any of us, we must inevitably have been lost ; having neglected to provide ourselves with long ropes in case of such an event. This man was probably the first person, who ever ventured

tured across the valley of ice, without either  
*crampons* or nails to his shoes.

We were now almost arrived at the other extremity, when we were stopped by a chasm so broad, that there was no possibility of passing it: we were obliged to make a circuit of above a quarter of a mile, in order to get round this vast opening. This will give you some idea of the difficulty attending excursions over some of these glaciers: and our guides informed us, that when they hunt the *chamois* and the *marmottes*, in these desolate regions; these unavoidable circuits generally carry them six or seven miles about, when they would have only two miles to go if they could proceed in a straight line. A storm threatening us every moment, we were obliged to hasten off the glacier as fast as possible: for, rain renders the ice exceedingly slippery; and in case of a fog (which generally accompanies a storm in these upper regions) our situation would have been extremely dangerous. And indeed we had no time to lose; for the tempest began just as we had quitted the ice; and soon became very violent, attended with frequent flashes of lightning, and loud peals of



thunder, which being re-echoed within the hollows of the mountains, added greatly to the awful sublimity of the scene.

We now descended a very steep precipice, and for some way were obliged to crawl upon our hands and feet down a bare rock; the storm at the same time roaring over us, and rendering the rock extremely slippery: we were by this time quite wet through, but we got to the bottom however without much hurt. Upon observing the immense extent of these glaciers, I could not help remarking (and it is a circumstance which many other travellers have observed before) what a fund is here laid up for the supply of rivers; and that the sources which give rise to the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Po will never fail. I returned at length to the inn, as dripping wet as if I had been plunged into water; but perfectly satisfied with my expedition. At Grindelwald, and at Lauterbrunnen, I had scarcely seen a glacier; owing to the ignorance of the guides: and this induced me to suspect, that all which had been said of them was greatly exaggerated\*. But I

\* See pages 172, and 173.

now change my tone, and am vexed that we were so pressed for time, that we could not continue any longer at Chamouny; for, I should have had great pleasure in making different excursions towards Mont Blanc, and in penetrating farther into those desolate but magnificent regions.

I cannot conceive any subject in natural history more curious than the formation and progress of these glaciers; running far into fields of corn and rich pasture, and lying, without being melted, in a situation where the sun has power sufficient to ripen the fruits of the field: it is literally true, that with one hand we could touch ice, and with the other ripe corn. But, as this is a subject too important to be treated superficially, and requires much accurate observation, and repeated experimental investigation; I shall not attempt to enter into it. I will beg leave nevertheless to trouble you with one observation, which I made; and it will serve to prove the occasional increase and diminution of the glaciers; contrary to the opinion of some philosophers, who advance that they remain always the same; and of others who assert,

that, they are continually encroaching. I think I may venture to assert, that both these positions are equally untenable, and it happens in this, as in many other subjects, that experience and truth are sacrificed to the supporting of a favourite hypothesis. Indeed the fact seems to be, that these glaciers in some years encroach considerably in extent, while in others they recede, and of this I am perfectly convinced from the following circumstances :

The borders of the valley of ice of the glacier of Montenvert, are mostly skirted with trees: towards its foot a vast arch of ice rises to near an hundred feet in height, from under which, the continued droppings from the melting of the ice and snow are collected together, and form the Arveron; which rushes forth with considerable force, and in a large body of water. As we approached the extremity of this arch, we passed through a wood of firs: those which stand at a little distance from the ice are about eighty feet high, and are undoubtedly of a very great age. Between these and the glacier, the trees are of a later

later growth, as is evident as well from their inferior size, as from their texture and shape. Others, which resemble the latter, have been overturned, and enveloped in the ice: in all these several trees, respectively situated in the spots I have mentioned, there seems to be a kind of regular gradation in their age, from the largest size to those that lie prostrate.

These facts fairly lead, it should seem, to the following conclusions:—that the glacier once extended as far as the row of tall firs; that, upon its retiring, a number of trees have shot up in the very spots which it formerly occupied; that, within some years, the glacier has again begun to advance; and in its progress has overturned the trees of later date, before they have had time to grow up to any considerable height.

To these circumstances, another fact may be added, which appears to me convincing. There are large stones of granite, which are found only at a small distance from the extremities of the glacier. These are vast fragments, which have certainly fallen down from the mountains upon the ice; have been carried on by the glacier in its increase;

crevasses, and have tumbled into the plain upon the melting or sinking of the ice which supported them. These stones, which the inhabitants call *Morrens*, form a kind of border, towards the foot of the valley of ice, and have been pushed forward by the glacier in its advances: they extend even to the place occupied by the larger pines.

As we proceeded from Chamouny, the height of the mountains gradually diminished; and the several valleys through which we passed, were diversified in their figures and productions in a very agreeable manner. These scenes, to travellers who come from the more cultivated and less romantic parts of Switzerland, must appear infinitely astonishing; but with respect to ourselves, who are lately arrived from the wildest country, and the most barren rocks, they made but little impression.

We followed the course of the Arve, which rushes along in a sonorous torrent great part of the way. Not far from Sallanche we came to a descent, where on our right-hand was a small lake formed by a stream, that bursts from the rock; and

from this lake issues a current which falls into the Arve. The situation was picturesque, and the borders of the little lake, skirted with wood, were extremely pleasing and variegated. From hence we descended into the plain, which continues almost perfectly level to Geneva. Salenche lies at the bottom of a broad valley, which here contracts to a narrow pass. Tradition says, that this little plain was once a lake, and indeed its form, and the quality of the soil, seem to justify tradition: great part is laid waste by the unruly Arve, which frequently overflows its banks, and the rest is mostly covered with fruit-trees.

Not far from Magland we stopped to admire a beautiful fall of water, called the cascade of Arpenas; it is a torrent which rushes, like the Staubbach, from an impending rock. When I saw it, there was a considerable wind, which drove the torrent, soon after its leaving the rock, at least an hundred yards out of the perpendicular direction, into an almost imperceptible spray: I then beheld it trickling down the sides of the mountains in a thousand little streams, which united at a  
ridge

ridge of the rock; and from thence formed three cascades, all different from each other. The body of water was much more considerable than that of the Staubbach, and the fall appeared to me altogether as high. Between Magland and Cluse we took a guide to conduct us to the cave of *Baume*; of which we had read a most magnificent description. Though the ascent was not very high, yet it was so steep that we were nearly an hour in reaching it: we then scrambled along an ugly precipice, from which we mounted a ladder; and by the aid of the branches of a nut-tree growing out of the rock at the mouth of the cave, we pulled ourselves into a natural cavern more than a quarter of a mile in length, and forming various branches that led into lofty vaults and spacious openings. A man of a very warm imagination, might perhaps have discovered a magnificent chapel with a natural cupola, an arsenal, the ruins of a sumptuous palace, &c.; but as for my part, I saw only a spacious cave, covered with stalactites, spars, and petrifications, which shone beautifully enough, but which I have

have seen in almost all the natural caverns I ever entered: nor was this so transcendently beautiful, as to answer the trouble it cost us to get into it.

We passed the night at Gluse, which is situated in a rich plain by the side of the Arve; and the next morning came down the banks of that river to Bonneville, the capital of the dutchy of Faucigny: it stands also upon the Arve, at the bottom of a chain of rocks, which from this place diminish into hills. All this part of Faucigny, as also a small strip of the Chablais through which we passed, is a rich plain, that produces wine and corn in great plenty: but it is neither very populous nor perfectly well cultivated. By the little village of Chene we entered into the territory of Geneva: the sudden change from the poverty of the Savoyards to the neatness and ease of these people; the populousness of the country; the richness of its cultivation; and the number of country-houses scattered about the fields like ours in England; were circumstances that affected me with the most pleasing admiration. I am, &c.

L E T T E R



## L E T T E R. XXIV.

**A**S I propose visiting Geneva again, in my way to the south of France, I will defer sending you any account of that interesting town until my return; when, as I intend passing a short time there, I hope to get some farther information concerning the government, &c. which I will not fail of communicating to you.

We went from Geneva to Crass, a small village in the Pays de Vaud, where we passed a day with one of our countrymen, who has taken a house for the summer in that delightful spot. In our way to Crass we went through Versoi, a little village in the French territories, upon the lake of Geneva: it goes by the name of *Cboiseul's folly*. Geneva having fallen under the displeasure of France; that minister endeavouring to take advantage of the late troubles in 1768, laid a plan to ruin that town, and to monopolise the whole trade of the lake. Accordingly he fixed upon Versoi as a situation the most proper, upon which to build a large town. For this purpose, he began by sinking a pier and making

making an harbour: he constructed also a frigate; marked out the forests; sent a considerable quantity of stone to build the houses; ordered a garrison, and erected huts for them, in which they continued some time. In short, the borders of the lake for some way are strewed with all kinds of materials for building. Nevertheless, when the harbour was nearly finished, and government had expended near three millions of livres; the whole scheme was given up. But the harbour, the huts, and the materials for building still remain, disgraceful monuments of his ill-concerted project.

This *Pays de Vaud* is a region, of which all historians and travellers, who have had occasion to mention it, speak with rapture; particularly of that part which borders upon the lake of Geneva: and indeed a more delightful country cannot well be imagined. It is, almost the whole way, a gradual ascent from the edge of the lake, richly laid out in vineyards, corn-fields, and luxuriant meadows; and chequered with continued hamlets, villages, and towns: the shores are generally of the cleanest

cleanest gravel; and the water is of so fine a transparency, that you may see the bottom to a very considerable depth.

We passed through Nyon, which stands upon the edge of the lake, and in the very point where it begins to widen. It was formerly called *Colonia Equestris Novidunum*; and, as a proof of its antiquity, several Roman inscriptions, and other antient remains, have been frequently dug up in the out-skirts of the town. Between St. Pres and Morges, the lake forms a beautiful bay: these towns are situated upon the two points which jut out into the water; the whole forming an amphitheatre gently rising to the Jura.

All the possessions in this country which belonged to the duke of Savoy, were wrested from him in the war which the canton of Berne declared against him, in 1536, in defence of Geneva: and the same year the reformation was introduced. From that period all the Pays de Vaud (excepting the common bailliages of Grandson, Orbe, and a small portion of it which was ceded to Fribourg) has been subject to Berne, and makes part of that canton.

Lausanne

Lausanne is built upon an ascent so steep, that in some places it is with great difficulty the horses can draw up a carriage; and foot-passengers mount towards the upper part of the town by flights of steps, which lean against the rock. But these inconveniences are amply compensated by the sublimest views in nature: the principal object is the lake of Geneva, shaped like a bow; the *arc* of which is formed by the Pays de Vaud, and the *gord* by the coast of Chablais. From Geneva to Villeneuve, (the two extremities of this lake) may be an extent of above forty miles: it varies in its breadth; the narrowest part is scarcely three miles across, and from Rolles to Thonon about fifteen. It is not altogether so large as that of Constance, but the scenery is far more grand and picturesque.

The same year in which part of the Pays de Vaud was conquered from the house of Savoy, the inhabitants of this town expelled the bishop, and put themselves under the protection and sovereignty of the canton of Berns; which confirmed all their privileges, and added others. At present,

present, Lausanne is governed by its own magistrates ; has its own courts of justice ; and, what is very singular, the citizens who inhabit the principal street have the privilege of pronouncing sentence in criminal causes. The criminal is tried by the civil power : if he is found, and acknowledges himself, guilty (for his own confession is necessary, otherwise he is put to the torture until he confesses) the burghers of this street assemble ; an advocate pleads in defence of the prisoner, and another against him ; the court of justice give their opinion upon the point of law ; and the majority of the burghers in question determine the penalty. If the punishment be capital, there is, strictly speaking, no pardon, except it be obtained within twenty-four hours from the sovereign council of Berne ; although it generally happens that eight days are granted for that purpose. When the criminal is seized within the jurisdiction of the town ; the fact is tried, and the burghers pronounce sentence, in the town-hall : in this case there is no appeal. But, when he is taken within the district of the bailiff, they assemble

assemble in his house, and an appeal lies from their determination to Berne. I have been the more particular in my enquiries concerning the mode of this criminal process, from the strong resemblance it bears in many respects to our trial by juries.

Here is a celebrated academy for the students of this country; as there is another at Berne for those of the German district: professors in every science are appointed by government; and there is a tolerable library for the use of the public. The *manage* of Mr. De Mezery, is by far the best of a great number we have seen: his skill in horsemanship, and judicious manner of conveying his instructions, deserve the highest encomiums. His position and figure are firm and elegant, and the horses, which are reserved for his own riding, are dressed with great taste and precision. His method of disciplining them is mild; because, from his perfect knowledge of the nature of the animal, he forces them to nothing which they are not well qualified to perform.

I have had the good fortune, several  
 oldm.L. S 2 times,

times; to meet Tissot, the celebrated physician of this place; well known in the literary world for his excellent writings upon several medical subjects. His conversation is uncommonly interesting; as, besides his skill in his profession, he is well versed in every branch of polite literature. His private character is no less respectable than his public; and he is as much esteemed for his great humanity as for his superior knowledge.

Lausanne at present contains scarcely seven thousand inhabitants; whereas, a few years ago, there were at least ten thousand: and indeed the whole Pays de Vaud is much less peopled than it was during the last century. This depopulation is owing to the encrease of luxury; which prevents the gentry from entering into matrimonial engagements so generally as they were heretofore accustomed; and induces numbers of them continually to emigrate in order to engage in foreign services. For, although the government of Berne is certainly very mild, and never lays on any additional taxes, nor ever encroaches upon the privileges of their subjects,

jects; yet, as the gentry are totally excluded from any share in the administration of public affairs, and commerce is reckoned degrading, they have no other resource but in foreign services. For this reason, many of them are malecontents, and would gladly exchange the mild republican form, under which they live, for a monarchical mode of government.

The road from hence to Vevay, is most delightful: it lies along the sides of the mountains, between continued ranges of beautiful vineyards. The industry of the Swiss is no where more observable than in these parts: the mountains in many places, though naturally consisting of a bare steep rock, are covered thick with vines. The soil has been brought from other grounds, and is supported by rows of little stone walls raised from the edge of the lake to the heights above. This district between Lausanne and Vevay is called *La Paux*, and contains the two pleasant little towns of Lutry and Cully; as also the two villages of St. Saphorin\* and

\* In the church of St. Saphorin, is an ancient Roman



and Corrier : it is entirely hilly, rising abruptly from the lake. Above the vineyards are rich meadows, and a continued Forest.

Vevay is the principal town of the bailiage of that name : it is clean and well-built, stands at the foot of the mountains on the edge of the water, and is one of the few towns in the canton of Berne which carry on any considerable trade. The borders of this part of the lake are much

than mile-stone, found near that village, with the following inscription :

TI. CLAUDIVS. DRVSI. F.  
CÆS. AVG. GERM.  
PONT. MAX. TRIB. POT. VII.  
IMP. XII. P. P. COS. IIII.

F A

XXXVII.

This inscription ascertains two circumstances, which have been frequently called in question ; namely, that the banks of the lake of Geneva, which border this part of Switzerland, were comprised within a Roman province, even so early as the time of Claudius ; and also, that *Aventicum* was the chief town of this part of Helvetia : for, the mile-stones always referred to the capital town of the province in which they were placed. From St. Saphorin to *Avenches* is exactly 37,000 paces ; which answer to the 37th mile-stone.

more

more contrasted, wild, and picturesque, than those about Geneva: the Alps of Savoy boldly jut out into the water, and form a semicircular chain of mountains that enclose the lake, except where they are divided by the Rhone; which flows into it a few leagues from Vevay.

Near Vevay is Clarens, and opposite is Meillerie: these are the scenes of Rousseau's *Heloise*. Accordingly I hired that novel at a circulating library in Lausanne; and continued, all the way I passed, examining the position of the country, and comparing it with the descriptions by that celebrated author. Little things may be magnified; but no pencil, however animated, can come up to the wonderful and sublime works of nature; even the warm colouring of Rousseau has not equalled the beauty of this situation. I read with attention the principal parts of that extraordinary performance; and now that I had the scenery, as it were, before my eyes, I enjoyed in the perusal sensations which I had never felt before. I dwelt more particularly, and with infinite pleasure, upon that fine letter, in which St.

Preux relates his expedition to Meillerie across the lake : I consider it as the master-piece of the whole composition ; where the passions of love and despair are worked up almost to madness. I observed the dark gloomy rocks of Meillerie ; and am convinced, from the appearance of the opposite shore, that, had I been on the other side, I could have discovered the very place to which St. Preux led his Juliä, and of which he gives so enchanting a description. For, although there are no traces of any history like that of Julia in these parts ; yet the scenery is strongly marked ; and I am satisfied that almost every spot, which is mentioned in the letters, actually exists in this romantic country. For, Rousseau himself passed some time at different parts on the borders of the lake, and particularly at Meillerie, about that period of his life when he may be supposed to have written his *Heloise*. Open that performance, read that letter, and consider that part of it, where St. Preux points out the number of towns and villages, the continued fertility and high cultivation of the *Pays de Vaud*, and then contrast it with

with the barren rocks of Chablais, exhibiting here and there a few insulated towns, which lie upon the very edge of the water; you will see at once, and in the same point of view, the fatal influence of despotism, and the happy effects which arise from the most assured liberty, under a mild and equitable government\*.

I am, &c.

Lausanne, Sept. 4,

\* It having been thought by some readers, that in this place and a few other passages too favourable mention is made of a writer, who in the work here alluded to, as well as in his other publications, has given great and just offence to the friends of religion and virtue; the author embraces with particular satisfaction the opportunity, which this second edition affords him, to declare, that no man has a more just sense and abhorrence of the pernicious tendency of Rousseau's writings than himself. But he presumes, that to reprobate his principles as a moralist, is by no means inconsistent with admiring his pencil as a landscape-painter. And having had occasion, in the tour through Switzerland, to compare his local descriptions with the scenes they exhibit, he was so struck with the truth and warmth of these representations, as to see no reason for suppressing the sentiments they raised of his genius in those instances; sincerely as he condemns and laments the unworthy and dangerous perversion of it in other respects, and particularly in his *Maxims of the*

LETTER

## LETTER XXV.

Yverdun, Sept. 7.

**T**HE chain of mountains called the *Jura*, begins in the canton of Zurich; from thence extends along the Rhine, into the canton and bishopric of Basil; stretches into the canton of Soleure and the principality of Neuchatel; branches out towards the Pays de Vaud; separates that country from Franche Comté and Burgundy; and continues beyond the frontiers of the Genevois as far as the Rhone. In various parts this chain of mountains forms numberless small vallies upon the heights; several of which are contained within the district of the Pays de Vaud.

The valley of the lake of *Joux*, is so called from a lake of that name, upon the top of that part of the Jura called Mont Joux; and which lies in the bailliage of Romain Motier. It is about twelve miles by five; of which a circuit of above twelve miles is occupied by two lakes close to each other, and which formerly, without doubt, made but one: the largest of these is called

ed the lake of Joux. This valley contains several small villages considerably peopled, and the whole is beautifully checkered with fine forests, rich meadows, or flourishing fields of barley and oats. Besides these two lakes, a little farther is a third, which lies in Franche Comté. One shore of the largest of these lakes, is high rock, covered with wood; the opposite shore is a gentle ascent, well cultivated and producing grain, backed by an abrupt ridge adorned with pines, beech, and oak. The small lake close to it, is in its shape more oval, richly bordered with corn-fields and cottages.

Near the small village of Abbaye, a rivulet gushes from the bottom of the rock, and loses itself in the largest lake; the water whereof has no apparent outlet, but has certainly a subterraneous communication with the smaller lake. On the opposite shore of the latter, a stream issues out, turns some mills, and then is lost in a hollow gulph, formed (I suppose by the force of the current) in a perpendicular rock. About two miles farther, on the other side of the mountain, the river Orbe  
bursts

bursts forth, and is probably produced by the last-mentioned stream here ingulphed.

This little vale is very populous, containing about three thousand inhabitants, all of them remarkably industrious. Some few make watches, but the greatest part are employed in polishing crystals, granites, marasites, &c. In the small village of Pont, where we lodged, the greatest part of the inhabitants bear the surname of Rochat; a name which also runs through the village of Charboniere, with the exception of only two or three families; and is prevalent likewise in that of Abbaye: the whole number of these Rochats amounts to above a thousand. I enquired whether they took the appellation from any chief; as the Scottish clans do; or whether they were supposed to be descendents of the same family: I was assured, that the latter is the fact, and that their ancestors came originally from France.

In our ascent to this delightful vale, and as we descended through a variety of hill, valley, wood, and lawn; we had a most extensive prospect, comprehending great part of the Pays de Vaud, the lake of Geneva

neva with its mountainous boundary, and that of Neuchâtel. These two lakes appear, from that high point of view, to be nearly upon the same level\*, with no considerable swell of the country intervening.

We passed through the beautiful valley of Romain Motier to Orbe; which, according to antiquarians, was the most ancient town, and once the most powerful, of all Helvetia. It was called *Urba*, and was the capital of the *Pagus Urbigenus*: no remains however exist at present of its ancient splendour. Some antique fortifications, an old castle, and a round tower, are works probably of later and more turbulent times: they were erected, perhaps, when this country was divided into a number of petty sovereignties.

Orbe is an old town, placed in a very romantic situation: the country which lies round it, is hilly, and chiefly planted with vines. The town, which is governed by its own magistrates, is comprised within the bailliage of Echallens, belonging to

\* According to Mr. de Luc, the lake of Neuchâtel is 159 French feet above that of Geneva.



Berne and Fribourg: these two cantons alternately send a bailiff, who resides at Echallens, and remains in office during five years. When Berne appoints the bailiff, an appeal lies from his decisions to the sovereign council of Fribourg; as it does to the government of Berne, when he is nominated by Fribourg. By these means a great check is laid upon the exactions of the bailiff: and I am informed, that justice is no where more equally administered than in these common bailliages of the two cantons above-mentioned.

From Orbe we descended into the plain, which stretches to the lake of Yverdun. This plain was formerly covered as far as Entreroches (three leagues from its present position) and probably farther, by that lake: it is now, for a considerable part, a great swamp. We have taken up our lodgings at the baths of Yverdun, within a quarter of a mile of the town: these baths are strongly sulphureous, and much frequented during the summer months.

Yverdun is large, airy, and well-built with stone, like all the towns I have hitherto seen in the *Pays de Vaud*: it stands  
not

not far from the lake, in a small island formed by the two branches of the river Thiele. Between the town and the lake there is a pleasant lawn extending to the water, and planted with avenues of lime-trees. As one looks from this plain along the lake, it is skirted with high land, except on the opposite northern shore, the middle part of which is quite flat, and has much the appearance of a sea view.

Yverdun carries on some trade, has a few manufactures of muslin and linen, and is one of the passages for the merchandise which is brought from Piedmont to Germany. Literature flourishes to a very great degree in this town; which is celebrated also for its printing-press. This press was established the beginning of the present century; but was entirely neglected until some years ago, when it was renewed, with more success and with higher reputation than ever, by *Felice*, a Neapolitan of great learning and abilities.

The lake of Yverdun, or of Neuchatel, stretches from south to north about twenty miles in length, and in some places about five in breadth. The south-east part of it,

it, where we now are, is covered with country-houses, belonging chiefly to the inhabitants of Berne. To-day we dined with a gentleman of that town, a member of the sovereign council; whose acquaintance we made at the baths of Leuk; his country-house stands close to the water at the village of Clendy; commanding a pleasant prospect of the lake, and of the adjacent country.

It is somewhat extraordinary, that the Swiss (whose country abounds with situations inconceivably noble and picturesque, and where Nature wantons in all the luxuriant variety of her most striking beauties) that the Swiss should have adopted the dull and tasteless uniformity of the French gardens. I have frequently observed, in the midst of these romantic scenes, a majestic forest sliced out into little regular allées, and at the very borders of the fine lakes; artificial pools of water edged with sun-burnt parterres.

I am, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXVI.

Neuchâtel, Sept. 3.

WE skirted the west side of the lake, through *Grandson*, the principal town of a bailliage of that name, belonging to Berne and Fribourg, and remarkable for the battle in which Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, was defeated by the Swiss in 1476. We entered the principality of Neuchâtel about six miles from that town, and passed through St. Aubin, Boudri, Colombier, &c. each of them pleasant villages upon the borders of the water. The road runs along the side of the Jura, with the lake lying below it, through a country that resembled, in some measure, the district of La Vaux, between Lausanne and Vevay: the sides of the Jura are almost the whole way covered with vines, supported in many parts by low stone walls. The borders of the lake are more uniform than those of the lake of Geneva; and do not rise into such high, irregular, and grotesque alps as the coast of Chablais. Towards Grandson and St.

T

Aubin,

Aubin, the country is more diversified with meadows and corn-fields; but nearer to Neuchatel the upper parts of the mountains are cloathed with forest, and the midland and lower parts entirely planted with vines.

Between the lake and the Jura there are several rivers, which burst out from the rock in very considerable streams; and, after turning several mills, fall into the lake at a little distance from their source: most of the rivers in this country are formed in the same manner. The largest of these is that of La Serriere, near a small village of the same name, which we crossed to-day in our way to Colombier, where we dined with a family whose acquaintance we made at the baths of Leuk. We passed a very agreeable day with these amiable persons; by whom we were received with that frankness and unaffected ease which characterises true politeness. Indeed I cannot speak too highly of that genuine and unartful good-breeding, which, in general, distinguishes the Swiss gentry.

After dinner some musicians of the country gave us the *Rena des vaches*: that famous

motis air which was forbidden to be played  
 among the Swiss troops in the French ser-  
 vice; as it awakened in the soldiers such  
 a longing recollection of their native coun-  
 try, that it often produced in them a set-  
 tled melancholy, and occasioned frequent  
 desertion. The French call this species  
 of patriotic regret, *la maladie du pays*. There  
 is nothing, I think, peculiarly striking in  
 the tune; but, as it seems to be composed  
 of the most simple notes, the powerful  
 effect its melody has been found to have  
 upon the Swiss soldiers, in a foreign land,  
 is the less surprising. Nothing indeed re-  
 vives so lively a remembrance of former  
 scenes, as a piece of favourite music which  
 we were accustomed to hear amidst our  
 earliest and dearest connections: upon such  
 an occasion, a long train of associated ideas  
 will necessarily arise in the mind, and, if  
 not totally selfish, melt it into tenderness.  
 It is observable, that those who inhabit  
 mountainous countries are more subject to  
 this *maladie du pays* than others: and no  
 wonder; as their habits of life are essen-  
 tially different from what they find in  
 other parts. Accordingly, the Scotch  
 high-

highlanders, and the Biscayans, as well as the Swiss, when absent from their country, are peculiarly apt to be affected with every thing that recalls it to their minds.

Under the general name of Switzerland, as understood by foreigners, the principality of *Neuchatel* and *Vallengin*, together with the *Grisons*, the *Vallais*, and the republic of *Geneva*, are all comprised: but, strictly speaking, these are only allies of the Swiss, and do not form any part of that district, which is called Switzerland by the natives. The principality of Neuchatel and Vallengin is in alliance with the four neighbouring cantons, Berne, Lucerne, Fribourg, and Soleure: but besides this general confederacy, the town of Neuchatel has a particular connection with the canton of Berne; the inhabitants of the former being considered as co-burghers or fellow-citizens with those of the last-mentioned canton. The whole principality contains near forty thousand inhabitants; of which there are three thousand in the capital: it is there the governor resides, and the general administration of public affairs is carried on.

The

The town of Neuchatel is small. It lies partly upon the little plain between the lake and the Jura, and partly upon the declivity of that mountain : in consequence of which situation, some of its streets are rather steep. At the commencement of the present century, commerce was almost wholly a stranger here ; as the ridiculous pride of its being deemed degrading, generally prevailed among them. This senseless prejudice is now, however, well-nigh worn out ; and a considerable trade is carried on. The chief article of their exportation is wine, produced from the neighbouring vineyards, and much esteemed. Several manufactures also of cotton and muslin have been established with success : and within these few years, the merchants of this town have raised large fortunes,

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XXVII.

Neuchatel, Sept. 21.

**I** AM charmed with an expedition we have just been making to the summit of the Jura ; and I will give you a short

account



account of it, while the impression remains warm upon my mind.

The principality of Neuchâtel and Val-  
lengin, stretches from the lake to the li-  
mits of Franche Comté; containing in  
length, from north to south, about twelve  
leagues, and about six in its greatest  
breadth. The principality of Neuchâtel  
occupies all the plain, together with the  
lower parts of the mountains:—while Val-  
lengin is totally enclosed within the Jura.  
Parallel chains of the Jura run from east  
to west, and form, in the most elevated  
parts, several valleys. The lower grounds  
of this chain are partly laid out in arable-  
land, but principally in vineyards; the  
higher consist of a large tract of forest,  
which in many parts has been cleared  
away, and converted into considerable pas-  
ture-lands, intermixed with some fields of  
barley and oats. But what particularly  
deserves the attention of every curious tra-  
veller in these valleys, is the singular ge-  
nius and industry of the very populous  
inhabitants.

We passed through *Vallengin*, the capital  
of the district of that name; a small open  
burgh,

burgh, with a modern castle built on the ruins of an antient one. We then crossed the *Kal de Ruz*, which contains above twenty villages, mostly situated on both sides at the foot of the mountains which terminates the valley: the inhabitants in general are employed in agriculture, some few excepted, who follow occasionally the mechanical arts.

We arrived about mid-day at La Chaux de Fond, a large handsome village lying in a broad valley which borders upon Franche Comtè: from thence we proceeded to Locle in the same valley, through a continued range of pleasing cottages, which skirt both sides of the road; and such are scattered likewise all over the country. As these two little towns or villages carry on the same commerce; I shall comprehend them both under one common description.

In the two burghs of La Chaux de Fond and Locle, together with the districts belonging to them, there may be in the whole about six thousand souls. The genius and industry which so remarkably distinguish these sequestered people, is wonderful; as in this retired corner of the world, the

T 4

mechanical

mechanical arts flourish in their greatest perfection. The inhabitants carry on an extensive commerce in lace, stockings, cutlery, and other different kinds of merchandise of their own manufacture: but watch-making, and every branch of clock-work, are the articles in which they particularly and eminently excel. They not only make every utensil employed in those arts, but have invented several: and all sorts of workmen necessary for the completion of that branch of business, such as painters, enamellers, engravers, gilders, &c. are found in these villages; where it is supposed that, upon an average, about forty thousand watches are yearly made. The genius and industry, indeed, observable upon these mountains, exhibit a scene uncommonly pleasing; and no where, perhaps, (except in Geneva) are there such a number of people apparently so much at their ease. Accordingly, as every individual is sure, not only of obtaining a comfortable maintenance for himself, but of soon placing his children also in a way of getting their own livelihood; they all marry very early: for, women and children are employed

employed in some of the branches of watch-making; and a child but of ten years old may earn ten-pence a day, by giving the last polish to steel instruments, with the hand. And as to the men, there are few who do not get half-a-crown a day; and some, nine shillings.

Not many years ago, the greatest part of these valleys was almost one continued forest; but the wonder-working powers of industry have happily changed the scene into flourishing villages and fertile pastures. Population has encreased of course; and the following fact will give you some idea how much it has encreased:—Formerly the produce of the country was more than sufficient for the consumption of the inhabitants; at present, although it is considerably more cultivated, they draw seven-eighths of their provision from Franche Comté. And no wonder; for, besides the natural effect of their frequent and early marriages; every stranger, who brings a certificate of his good behaviour, is at liberty to settle here, and to carry on any trade he thinks proper, without the least restriction. Here, no apprenticeship is  
necessary;

necessary; nothing is contraband; and industry exerts herself untaxed.

Besides those particular arts I have already mentioned, some of the inhabitants of Locle and La Chaux-de-Fond are well skilled likewise in other branches of mechanical science, and have invented useful mathematical and astronomical instruments. Among those who have eminently distinguished themselves in this way, is the famous Jaquet Droz, who is now at Paris; and whose son, if I am rightly informed, is at present in England, exhibiting to the public several automatical figures of a very singular and surprising construction; one of these plays upon the harpsichord; another draws landscapes; and, what is still more extraordinary, a third copies any word presented to it, or writes down whatever the company shall please to dictate. These are certainly wonderful inventions, and seem to carry the powers of mechanism to a high pitch; but still they are mere toys, and surely an unworthy waste of great genius: it is Swift making riddles. How much more laudably, and with equal success, might the same talents and application have been employed in improving,

proving, or adding to, these instruments and apparatus, which are necessary to assist and facilitate the purposes of the astronomer and natural philosopher !

The origin of watch-making in this part of Switzerland, as related by Mr. Osterwald, ancient banneret of Neuchatel (the historiographer of these mountains) is extremely curious ; and the truth of his account was confirmed to me by several artists both of Locle and La Chaux de Fond. In 1679, one of the inhabitants brought with him from London a watch, the first that had been seen in these parts ; which happening to be out of order, he ventured to trust it in the hands of one Daniel John Richard, of La Sagne. Richard, after examining the mechanism with great attention, conceived himself capable, and was determined to attempt, to make a watch from the model before him : but to this end he was destitute of every other assistance than the powers of his own native genius. Accordingly he employed a whole year in inventing and in finishing the several instruments previously necessary for executing his purpose ; and in six months from

from that period, by the sole force of his own penetrating and persevering talents, he produced a complete watch. But his ambition and industry did not stop here; besides applying himself successfully to the invention of several new instruments useful for the perfection of his work, he took a journey to Geneva, where he gained considerable information in the art. He continued for some time the only man in these parts who could make a watch; but business encreasing, he took in, and instructed, several associates; by whose assistance he was enabled to supply from his single shop all the demands of the neighbouring country. Towards the beginning of the present century he removed to Locle, where he died in 1741, leaving five sons, who all of them followed their father's occupation. From these the knowledge and practice of the art gradually spread itself, till it at length became almost the universal business of the inhabitants, and the principal cause of the populousness, of these mountains.

But it is not merely in the articles above-mentioned, that the inventive genius of this mechanical people is observable; it disco-

vers

vers itself upon all occasions where it can be applied to the purposes of their convenience and accommodations. To give you an instance : the rocks in most parts of the alps being exceedingly hard and solid ; the water can only make its way along their sides, and rush down in perpetual torrents ; but, the strata which compose the Jura being less firm and compact ; the rains and melted snow penetrate with impetuosity into the crevices, and only discover themselves by breaking out into rivulets at the bottom of the mountains. Now the peasants, in order to avail themselves of this peculiarity, have erected mills at a great expence, and with inconceivable labour, some yards under the rock ; which are turned by those internal torrents of water, that force their way through the crevices above-mentioned. And for this purpose the builders have constructed wheels, in places where it seemed scarcely practicable ; and have invented new modes of scaffolding, and a great variety of other ingenious contrivances in order to facilitate their work.

The inhabitants of these several districts  
are



are exceedingly courteous, and ready to give every assistance in their power to strangers who visit their country. They are in general very well informed in several branches of knowledge ; and, as they usually employ their leisure hours in reading, there are circulating libraries to be found in many of the villages.

Their houses are in general small, but handsome, and well-built : several of those, which we entered, were furnished with a degree of neatness, and even elegance, peculiarly striking. Indeed luxury (or what according to the simplicity of manners is here called so) the never-failing attendant upon successful industry, has made no inconsiderable progress in these mountains : of which I had a curious proof from an inhabitant of Locle ; who seriously complained to me, that it was now no uncommon circumstance for a master of a family to carry his wife to see a play at Besançon ; and that there were, at this time, at least ten hair-dressers established at Locle ; whereas some few years ago there was but one to be found in the town, and in the whole district.

The

The rock which forms the base of the Jura, is mostly composed of calcareous stone; and perhaps there is no spot in Europe where one finds, in so small a space, so large a quantity of petrified shells and marine plants. Near Locle I saw a whole ridge of hills, that seemed to consist entirely of what are called *pierres arborifères*, or stones with the impression of plants upon them.

In returning, we had a most sublime prospect of the lakes of Neuchatel, Bienné, and Morat, with several high and rugged chains of alps rising one above another, and stretching from the cantons of Berné and Fribourg, as far as the Vallais, and the mountains of Chablais.

The most perfect ease and plenty reigns throughout these mountains, and I scarcely saw one object of poverty during our expedition; the natural effects of industry under a mild and equitable government. It is of these vallies, and of their inhabitants, that Rousseau gives so enchanting a description in his letter to Mr. D'Alembert: to which I refer you.

I am, &c.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXVIII.

**N**EUCHATTEL and Vallengin once formed two distinct principalities, each having a separate and independent government : but for some time past they have been united into one. By the death of the dutchess of Nemours, in 1707, the sovereignty of Neuchatel and Vallengin became vacant ; to which Frederic I. king of Prussia (amongst many others) put in his claim, as heir to the prince of Orange : and his right was acknowledged by the states of the country. After his death it descended to his son Frederic William, who transmitted it with his other dominions to the present monarch Frederic II.

The constitution of Neuchatel is a limited monarchy. The machine of this government is indeed actuated by such nice springs, and its wheels are so exceedingly complicated, that it is very difficult for a stranger to distinguish, with any degree of accuracy, the prerogatives of the sovereign, and the franchises of the people : particularly as some even of their most important

important privileges, depend upon mutual acquiescence, and immemorial custom, and not upon any written laws. I shall endeavour, however, as well as I am able, to trace the principal features of this government; the result of my best enquiries during the short time I continued in the country, and which I have since compared with all the printed accounts I have been able to collect.

Upon the accession of Frederic I. certain general articles were drawn up, which in a great measure marked out the prerogatives of the prince, and the liberties of the subject; and these articles were signed and ratified by the king. But besides these general articles, which his present Majesty upon his accession promised to preserve inviolate; others were afterwards added at the pacification of 1768: and these put an end to the dispute between the sovereign and his subjects of this principality. By this pacification, the king not only renewed his assent to the *general* articles; but also explained them, wherever the tenor of them had been mistaken; expressly confirming also several other privileges

vileges in favour of the people, which had hitherto been equivocal, or not duly observed.

The most important of these general articles are :

1. That the sovereign promises to maintain the reformed religion as by law established; and to tolerate no other sect, except within the districts of *Landeron* and *Croffier*, where the catholic religion is dominant.

2. That no person but a native of the country, although he may be naturalised, is capable of holding any charge civil or military, excepting that of governor, who may be a foreigner; and the same incapacity is extended even to natives, who are in the service of any foreign prince whatsoever.

3. That all the subjects have a right to enter into the service of any foreign power whatsoever; provided That power, whom they serve, be not in actual war against the prince, as sovereign of *Neuchatel*: and in case the sovereign be engaged in any war, which no way concerns *Neuchatel*; that state shall continue

neuter,

neuter, except the Helvetic body take part in it\*.

4. That justice be equitably administered: and, for this purpose, that the three estates of Neuchâtel and Vallengin shall be assembled yearly.

5. That the magistrates and officers of justice, instead of holding their employ-

\* The latter clause of this article is not so clearly worded as it might have been; from a delicacy, I suppose, of not expressly stipulating, that the state of Neuchâtel and Vallengin may oppose their sovereign by arms, in case the Swiss should be engaged in any war against him. It is evident, however, that they consider their connection with the Helvetic body, as of superior obligation to that with their prince, as sovereign of Neuchâtel and Vallengin.

The remarkable clause in question is as follows:

*Et qu'en outre et conformément à des articles exprès et formels des franchises tant de la bourgeoisie de Neuchâtel que de celle de Vallengin, cet Etat ne puisse être engagé dans aucune guerre, ni les sujets d'icelui obligés d'y marcher, que ce ne soit pour la propre guerre du Prince, c'est à dire, pour la défense de l'Etat, et pour les guerres que le Prince pourroit avoir en tant que souverain de Neuchâtel et non autrement: en sorte que s'il avoit guerre pour raison de quelque autre Etat, terres et seigneuries, l'Etat de Neuchâtel ne soit point obligé d'y entrer; mais en ce cas devra demeurer dans la neutralité, à moins que tout le corps Helvétique en général n'y prit part et intérêt.*

ments during pleasure, shall enjoy them during their good behaviour. And, by the late pacification it was farther agreed, that the prince is not himself the judge of their good behaviour; but that in order to be deprived of their places, they must be fully convicted of malversation in office, by certain judges at Neuchatel appointed for that purpose.

6. That the sovereign shall take the accustomed oath upon his accession; and promise to maintain all the rights, liberties, franchises, and customs, written or unwritten.

It is remarkable, that one of the most essential laws of this constitution, depends entirely upon immemorial usage; for, that "the sovereign shall be considered as resident only at Neuchatel," is in the number of their unwritten laws. Now it is this law, in conjunction with the third article just cited, that forms the whole basis of their civil liberty. By the former, the prince, when absent, can only address his subjects through his governor and the council of state; and no subject can be tried out of the country, or otherwise than

than by the judges appointed by the constitution: by the latter, should the king of Prussia be at war with all Germany; the people of Neuchatel and Vallengin are by no means obliged to take up arms in his defence; but individuals may even serve against him, so long as the powers whom they serve, are not engaged in hostilities against their country \*.

Besides:

\* This right they still preserve, notwithstanding all the attempts of the king of Prussia to deprive them of it. The following anecdote I had from a gentleman of Neuchatel, who was personally acquainted with the officer concerned :

At the celebrated battle of Rossbach, when the Prussian monarch gained a complete victory over the French army, an officer in that service was taken prisoner. He had behaved in so gallant a manner, that the king, struck with his valour, asked him his name, and his country: the officer replying, that he was of Neuchatel: " You are my subject," said that monarch, " and yet you serve against me !" " I make use of the " privilege," returned the officer, " which I enjoy as " a native of Neuchatel." Soon after this, the king sent a letter to his resident at Neuchatel, in which he remonstrated against this right: the letter was laid before the people. The three communities of Neuchatel; Landeron, and Boudry, positively refused to renounce this privilege; that of Vallengin, on the



Besides these general articles, that comprehend the privileges of the people at large; there are others which the sovereign is equally bound to maintain, relating to the town of Neuchâtel and the district of Vallengin; in particular.

The prince confers nobility, and nominates to the principal offices of state, both civil and military, except some few, which the people have a right to appoint: the *châtelains* and mayors, who preside in the several courts of justice, are also of his nomination. His revenues are very moderate, scarcely amounting to £. 5,000 a year. They arise from certain domains belonging to the sovereign; from a small land tax; and from the tythes of wine and corn, which are mostly paid according to an antient, and consequently very low, valuation. With regard to commerce;

contrary, issued out orders to all the officers of their district, who were in the French army, immediately to quit that service, under pain of being deprived of their burghership. The officers to a man remained firm in their refusal: at length the subject of dispute was dropped, and the recusants continued to hold, unmolested, their rights of burghership.

no subject pays any duties either of importation or exportation, except for foreign wines imported into the town of Neuchatel.

During the absence of the prince, he is represented by a governor of his own appointing; who enjoys considerable honours indeed, but his authority is very limited. He convokes the three estates; presides in that assembly; and has the casting vote in case of an equality of voices: he has the power also, in criminal cases, of pardoning, or of mitigating the sentence. In his absence his place is supplied by the senior counsellor of state.

The three estates of Neuchatel, form the superior tribunal of this country; and to them lies an appeal from the inferior courts of justice. They are composed of twelve judges, divided into three estates: the *first* consists of the four senior counsellors of state, who are noble: the *second*, of the four *chatelains* of Landeron, Boudry, Valde Travers, and Thielle \*; and in case these cannot

\* The principality of Neuchatel is divided into a certain number of districts; some of which are deno-

cannot sit in person, their place is supplied by the respective mayors of the principality of Neuchatel, according to a certain order expressly regulated: the *third* estate is composed of four counsellors of the town of Neuchatel. The judges in the first and second division hold their places for life; those in the third are appointed annually. This body ordinarily assembles every year in the month of May; but is convoked extraordinarily upon particular occasions: the town of Neuchatel is always the place of their meeting.

These three estates are not, as several authors have supposed, the representatives of the people; nor do they possess the legislative authority. They are, properly speaking, the supreme court of judicature, which receives all appeals, and decides finally all causes, even those relating to the sovereignty of the country: a power which they exercised in the year 1707,

minated *chatellanies*, and others *mayeralties*. The chiefs of the former are called *chatelains*, and of the latter *mayors*: in every other respect their office and their power is the same.

upon

upon the extinction of the direct line in the person of the dutchess of Nemours \*.

The council of state is invested with the ordinary administration of government; has the superintendence of the general police; and is entrusted with the execution of the laws. The members are nominated by the sovereign; and are not limited to any particular number. The prince has no power but in conjunction with this council; in which he is always considered as personally presiding: and the power of the president is only to convoke the assembly, to propose the subject of their consideration, to collect the votes, and to decide when the voices are equal. Previous to the issuing of any ordinance by this

\* It may be here worth remarking, that the three estates decided the famous cause of the succession in 1707, as a process between the several claimants of the sovereignty. But if (in case of failure of claimants) a new sovereign were to be chosen, or a new form of government to be established; this would no longer be considered as the affair of a court of judicature: the question would come before the people assembled by means of their representatives, the deputies of the four communities of Neuchatel, Landeron, Boudry, and Vallengin.

council,

council, it is laid before a committee from the council of the town and the deputies of Vallengin, who are to certify, that it contains nothing contrary to law.

The town of Neuchatel enjoys very considerable privileges : it has the care of the police within its own district, and is governed by its own magistracy, consisting of a great and little council. I will not trouble you with a detail of the several departments ; but I cannot omit mentioning the *ministres* ; because the members of that body form the third estate, whenever it is proposed to frame new laws, or to amend old ones. The *ministres* are a kind of committee from the council of the town, and are entrusted with the administration of the police. They consist of the two presidents of that council, four master-burghers drawn from the little council, and the *banneret* or guardian of the liberties of the people. The six former are changed every two years ; the banneret is chosen by the general assembly of the citizens, and continues in office six years.

The legislative authority is divided in so complicated a manner, that it would be difficult

difficult to say precisely where it absolutely resides : perhaps the following account of the persons concerned, and of the forms observed, in enacting and in promulgating new laws, may somewhat assist in clearing the difficulty.

As soon as the causes are decided by the three estates assembled (as I mentioned above) in the month of May, the four judges, who form the third estate, retire; and their place is supplied by the four *ministres*, who represent the council of the town. The attorney-general then desires the members of the three estates to take into consideration, whether it be necessary to frame any new laws, or to make any amendments in the old ones. If any new ordinance is proposed; a declaration is drawn up, and delivered to the council of state for their deliberation, whether any thing therein is contrary to the prerogatives of the prince, or to the interest of the public : from thence it is communicated to the council of the town, to be examined, whether it infringes the privileges of the citizens of Neuchâtel. If it be adopted by the council of state, and

and the council of the town; it is proposed to the prince for his approbation or rejection: in the former case, it is again carried before the three estates, and publicly read; after which the governor, or president, declares the approbation of the sovereign. It is then promulgated, or, as the expression is, passed into a law by the three estates.

Since the accession of the house of Brandenburg, the people of Vallengin are always consulted upon the framing of any new laws. For this purpose the three master-burghers of Vallengin examine, whether it contains any thing inconsistent with the franchises of the people of that district: and, in that case, they have the power of remonstrating to the governor in council.

From all this detail it should seem, that the legislative authority resides conjunctively in the prince, the council of state, and the town; that the people of Vallengin have a kind of negative voice; and that the three estates propose and promulgate the laws.

Every year, after the breaking-up of  
the

the assembly of the three estates of Neuchâtel; the three estates of Vallengin, as constituting the supreme court of judicature for that country, meet at their capital burgh, and decide finally on all appeals from the inferior courts of justice. The *first* of these three estates consists of the same four noble counsellors of state, who sit in the first of the three estates of Neuchâtel; four mayors of the county of Vallengin compose the *second* estate; and four members of the court of justice of Vallengin, nominated by the mayor of that burgh, constitute the *third*. The governor, or, in his absence, the senior counsellor, presides, as in those of Neuchâtel. These three estates of Vallengin have no interference in the framing of the laws; but, after they have been enacted or amended at Neuchâtel, in the manner above-mentioned, they are simply remitted to them by the solicitor-general, and publicly read before them.

The people of the district of Vallengin assemble every three years in an open plain, in order to elect their three *master-burghers*, as they are styled; who are respectively chosen



chosen from among the inhabitants of the burgh of Vallengin, of the Val de Ruz, and of the mountains. The function of these master-burghers is to watch over the general interests of the people: they are also in some cases their deputies, and appear at Neuchatel in their name, whenever they are summoned by the governor and council of state, in relation to any affair which particularly concerns their country.

The principality of Neuchatel is divided into a certain number of districts, each of which has its criminal courts of justice: in the county of Vallengin there is but one for the whole district. The spirit of their criminal laws is uncommonly mild; and the penalty annexed to each transgression is marked out with a precision, which leaves no part of the sentence to the arbitrary determination of the judges. The great circumspection observed in their judicial proceedings, may sometimes indeed favour the escape of the criminal: but the very few instances which occur of atrocious crimes, is a proof that this humane caution is no encouragement to trans-

transgressors ; as it is a strong presumption also of the general good morals of the people. In a word, and to speak of the temper of their legislation in the highest terms of encomium, as well as with the strictest truth ; personal liberty is as tenderly and as securely protected by the laws of this country, as by those of our own most invaluable constitution.

When the criminal is arrested, he is immediately brought to trial : after which, the sentence is read to him in prison. The next morning the prisoner is again brought before the judges, assembled in the *open air* ; the whole former proceedings on the trial are read aloud, and the judges once more deliver their opinion : by these means time is given for farther deliberation. In case the sentence is capital ; the governor is made acquainted without delay with the circumstances of the crime : and if he does not remit or soften the punishment, the sentence is immediately put in execution. I am sorry to add, that *torture* (though seldom made use of) is not absolutely abolished : it is the only circumstance wanting to render their code of penal laws, an admirable

admirable model of justice tempered with humanity.

Such are the general outlines of this remarkable constitution, by which the liberties of the people are as well, and perhaps better, secured than even in the democratical cantons : for, although the most despotic prince in Germany is sovereign, his power is exceedingly limited. Among those circumstances with which I was more particularly struck in this government, I cannot but mention the very liberal encouragement given to all strangers, who choose to settle in the country. They enjoy every possible privilege of trade and commerce ; and one can scarcely meet with any state, where fewer essential distinctions are made between these and the natives. I have already observed to you, the good effects which this enlarged policy has had, within the present century, on the population of Neuchatel and Vallengin : whereas, a narrower and more contracted principle in some of the neighbouring Swiss cantons, unwisely withholding them from giving encouragement to the settling of strangers among them ; has occasioned, and continues

continues to occasion, a very manifest decrease of their people.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R • XXIX.

Morat, Sept. 13.

**I**N our way to Avenches we crossed the river Thiele, which issues from the lake of Neuchatel, and discharges itself into that of Bienne: this river separates the principality of Neuchatel from the canton of Berne. Thiele is a district of the province of Neuchatel, and contains several villages in a tract of level country which produces wine, corn, and fruit: a spirit of industry prevails among the inhabitants, particularly those of the villages of Thiele and St. Blaise.

Morat is a bailliage belonging to Berne and Fribourg: the reformation was introduced here in 1530, by the majority of voices, in presence of the deputies of Berne and Fribourg. The free spirit of the Swiss governments is in no instance more remarkably apparent, than by the mode they observed in embracing, or rejecting, the

X                      reformation;

reformation; as, in many other towns besides Morat, the question was fairly put to the vote, and the minority generally submitted to the decision of the greater number, with perfect acquiescence.

This town stands upon the edge of a small lake (about six miles long, and two broad) in the midst of a well-cultivated country. The lakes of Morat and Neuchatel are parallel to each other, and separated only by a small hill: the former is the most elevated; for, it discharges itself by means of the river Broye, into the latter. According to Mr. de Luc, the lake of Morat is fifteen French feet (about sixteen of our measure) above the level of that of Neuchatel. Both these lakes, as well as that of Bienne, formerly extended much farther than their present limits; and I have little doubt, from the position of the country, that they were once united.

Morat is celebrated for the obstinate siege it sustained in 1476 against Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy; which was followed by the battle of Morat: in this famous engagement, the duke was routed, and

and his whole army almost entirely destroyed, by the confederate Swiss troops. Not far from the town, and close to the high road, there still remains a monument of this victory : It is a square building, filled with the bones of the soldiers belonging to the duke of Burgundy's army, who were slain at the siege and in the battle. By the quantity of these bones, it appears that the number of the slaughtered was considerable. Over the building are several inscriptions in Latin and German, relative to that memorable victory. I transcribed the following on account of its elegant conciseness :

*Deo Opt: Max:*  
*Caroli Incliti et Fortissimi*  
*Burgundiæ Ducis Exercitus*  
*Muratum obsidens ab Helvætiis*  
*Cæsus hoc sui Monumentum reliquit*  
*Ann: 1476.*

This war, which Charles the Bold carried on against the Swiss with a temerity peculiar to himself, forms a remarkable æra in the history of this country ; and was attended with some very extraordinary cir-

X 2 cumstances.

cumstances. From the time of the famous revolution in 1308, which gave rise to the Helvetic confederacy, to the end of the following century, the Swiss republics stripped the house of Austria of all their territories that lay within Switzerland; and continued in possession of them, notwithstanding the various attempts made by the different dukes to recover their lost domains. Among these, Sigismond the Simple, archduke of Austria of the branch of Tyrol, was more particularly engaged in perpetual hostilities with the Swiss cantons, and their allies: for, his hereditary dominions in Suabia and Alsace bordered upon Switzerland, and induced him to enter more frequently into these quarrels, than the other branch of that house, which was in possession of the imperial throne.

In the course of these hostilities, Sigismond was compelled to cede a considerable part of his territories to the Swiss republics; particularly the rich country of Thurgaw was yielded to the seven cantons, which at that period composed the Helvetic league\*. These repeated losses, and the

\* Berne obtained the co-regency of Thurgaw at the peace of Araw, 1712.

humiliating

humiliating conditions of peace he was constrained to accept in 1468, filled him with resentment; and he endeavoured to engage some of the neighbouring powers to join with him in a confederacy against the Swiss cantons. For this purpose, he first applied to Louis XI. king of France; but not succeeding, he addressed himself to Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy.

That prince having succeeded to the possession of Franche Comté, Burgundy, Artois, and Flanders, together with the greatest part of the now United Provinces; his revenues were as ample, and his territories as extensive, as those of the most potent sovereign of his time. Magnificent, impetuous, and enterprising, he set no bounds to his restless ambition; nor neglected any opportunity of enlarging his domains and aggrandising his power. He had formed the plan of erecting his dominions into a monarchy; and had already in imagination appropriated to himself Lorraine and part of Switzerland; which he proposed to conquer, and annex to his hereditary territories.



A prince of such a character could not but be well-disposed to listen to any overtures, or to undertake any war, that might advance his ambitious schemes. Accordingly, Charles received with eagerness the propositions which Sigismund made him; flattered him with the hopes of bestowing upon him in marriage his daughter Mary, heiress of his extensive dominions; and prevailed upon that credulous prince to surrender to him Sundgaw, Alsace, Brisgaw, and the four Forest-towns, as a pledge for the security of eighty thousand florins: upon the re-payment of which sum, the provinces in question were to be restored.

By this treaty, Sigismund acquired a sum of money to assist him in his preparations against the Swiss; protected, as he thought, his hereditary dominions from their enterprises; and secured a powerful ally against the antient enemies of his family. The reverse, however, proved to be the event: for, by a strange fatality, this treaty, which was to cement the union of the two princes, and to engage them to attack conjointly that formidable people, served only to divide the contracting parties; and occasioned

occasioned the first perpetual alliance between the Swiss cantons and a prince of the house of Austria.

Charles, upon the conclusion of this alliance, informed the Swiss cantons, that he had taken Sigismond under his protection, and would defend him to the utmost of his power. Meanwhile, the bailiffs, whom he placed over his new-acquired territories in Alsace, oppressed the people; laid embargoes upon the commerce of Mulhausen, a small town confederated with the cantons; and withheld the rents of the estates belonging to the Swiss in Sundgaw and Alsace.

These grievances were laid before Charles in an embassy, which Berne dispatched to his court in the name of the allied cantons. The duke received it with haughtiness; and after having obliged the deputies to kneel down, while they delivered their remonstrance, dismissed them without an answer. This disdainful and ignominious treatment was ill brooked by a free people; unaccustomed to crouch before the insolence of power; and the warmth of their just indignation was still more inflamed

flamed by the artful policy of Louis XI. who, jealous of the duke of Burgundy's power, now entered into a defensive alliance with the eight cantons, in conjunction with the republics of Fribourg and Soleure, in order to counteract the dangerous designs of that ambitious prince.

But Louis still farther strengthened the Swiss, by effecting a reconciliation between them and Sigismond: for, the latter had no sooner surrendered to Charles those towns which he had mortgaged to him upon the terms above-mentioned, than he began to be sensible of the error he had committed. The duke of Burgundy not only oppressed those people, but seemed determined, even should the 80,000 florins be repayed, to keep possession of these conditional territories: and he avoided also the fulfilling of the promise he had made of bestowing his daughter upon the archduke. From these considerations, the latter was easily induced, through the mediation of Louis, to throw himself under the protection of the Swiss; and he concluded with them the famous treaty, which was confirmed the twentieth of January,

diary, 1474, in the general diet assembled at Lucerne.

This alliance is called the *hereditary alliance*, an appellation, appropriated to the treaties made with the house of Austria; as those, contracted with France, are denominated treaties of *perpetual peace*. By the alliance in question, Sigismond renounced all right to the provinces which the Swiss had conquered from the house of Austria: the two contracting parties entered into a defensive alliance, and engaged to guarantee reciprocally each other's territories. Thus the Swiss, after having stripped Sigismond of all his possessions in their country, stipulated with him, to support his right to those very provinces, which he had mortgaged in order to strengthen his arms against themselves: and Sigismond was under the mortifying necessity of accepting the guarantee of the most inveterate enemies of his family.

This treaty, which entirely changed the designs and altered the policy of the Swiss republics, was solely brought about by the artful intrigues of Louis XI.; and the jealousy of that designing monarch turned  
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into another channel the vast preparations of the duke of Burgundy : preparations which would probably have been attended with more success, had they been directed against France.

Charles perceived, when it was too late, the imprudence of his behaviour towards the Swiss republics ; and he now tried every method to engage them in a neutrality : but they rejected his proposals of reconciliation with firmness ; prepared, with their usual vigour, for a war, which now appeared inevitable ; and even advanced the 80,000 florins to Sigismond, who demanded the restitution of his lands, and which the duke of Burgundy evaded under various pretexts. The latter having concluded a separate peace with Louis (who generally duped every state, with which he entered into alliance, and kept the most solemn treaties, no longer than they were subservient to his own interest) entered Swisserland with an army of sixty thousand men ; and, laying siege to Grandson, carried it by assault. But his success ended here : for, at the subsequent battles of Grandson and Morat, he was totally defeated,

defeated, and his attempts upon Swisserland entirely frustrated \*. Nevertheless,

\* Charles entered Swisserland confident of subduing that country. The effect which this unexpected and humiliating disappointment had upon his spirits and constitution, is related by Philip de Comines, with his usual minuteness, in his Memoirs addressed to Angelo Cattho, archbishop of Vienne in Dauphiné. His account is curious, and will give some idea of the violent and impetuous character of Charles :

“ His concern and distraction for his first defeat at Grandson was so great, and made such deep impression on his spirits, that it threw him into a violent and dangerous fit of sickness : for, whereas before, his choler and natural heat was so great, that he drank no wine, only in the morning he took a little tisane, sweetened with conserve of roses, to refresh himself : this sudden melancholy had so altered his constitution, he was now forced to drink the strongest wine that could be got, without any water. And, in order to draw the blood from his heart, some burning tow was put into the cupping-glasses, and applied to his side. But this, my lord of Vienne, you know better than I ; for, your lordship attended on him during the whole course of his illness, and spared no pains that might contribute to his recovery : and it was by your persuasion that the duke was prevailed upon to cut his beard, which was of a prodigious length. In my opinion his understanding was never so perfect, nor his senses so sedate and composed, after this fit of sickness, as before.”

*Uvedale's Transf. Vol. I. p. 423.*  
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his restless and ambitious spirit remained still unsubdued; and it impelled him to attack the duke of Lorraine. But that prince, having engaged a body of eight thousand Swiss in his pay, had the good fortune (for which he was very much indebted to the valour of those troops) to obtain a complete victory, near Nancy, over Charles, who lost his life in the battle \*.

His death put an end to this bloody war; from which, although the Swiss gave indeed the most distinguishing proofs of their invincible valour, and spread the fame of their military virtues throughout all Europe, they derived no solid advantage †. In fact, the principal and almost sole

\* The death of Charles at the battle of Nancy, was attended with some very extraordinary circumstances; for the particulars of which, see the curious account, extracted from Philip de Comines, and the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of John de Troyes, in *Waxal's* interesting *Memoirs of the Kings of France of the House of Valois*.

† “And what,” says Comines, “was the occasion of this war? It was begun on account of a waggon of sheep-skins, which the lord of Romont took from a Swiss, who was passing through his territories. If God had not abandoned the duke, it is not probable,

the benefit resulting from it, accrued to Louis XI, as by the death of Charles, he not only got rid of a dangerous and enterprising rival, but also annexed the rich provinces of Burgundy and Artois to the crown of France.

But, notwithstanding the immediate advantages to the Swiss by the death of the duke of Burgundy, were in themselves not important; yet the consequences of it operated very considerably on their future politics. Mary of Burgundy, the only surviving child and heiress of Charles, married the archduke Maximilian, eldest son of the emperor Frederic III. and afterwards

“ bable, that he would have put himself into so much  
 “ danger for so trifling a circumstance; considering,  
 “ the offers that were made to him; against what sort  
 “ of people he was engaged; and from whence neither  
 “ profit nor glory could accrue to him. For, the Swiss  
 “ were not in such repute, as they are in at present,  
 “ and nothing could be poorer: insomuch that one of  
 “ their ambassadors, as he was endeavouring to prevent  
 “ the duke from engaging in that war, remonstrated;  
 “ that he could gain nothing by attacking  
 “ them: for, their country was so barren, that the  
 “ spurs of his troops and the bits of their horses were  
 “ worth more, than could be furnished by all the  
 “ Swiss territories, in case they were conquered.”



emperor himself. By this marriage, the house of Austria acquired the possession of the Low-Countries; and having frequent disputes to settle with France, relating to those territories which border upon that kingdom; the alliance of the Swiss was strenuously courted by both parties. And thus this country, being secured from all enterprises from without; acceded as occasion offered to the two rival powers; assisting each party by turns, as the intrigues, or rather as the subsidies, of the one or the other prevailed.

These intrigues gave rise to different alliances, contracted with the house of Austria, the kings of France, the pope, and the dukes of Savoy and Milan.— But, not to enter more minutely into their history, I will only observe in general, that hitherto the Swiss had acted with great disinterestedness in all their treaties, and had never taken the field but either to secure their liberties, or to drive their enemies out of Switzerland. It was about the period of the Burgundian war, that the subsidies which they obtained from Louis XI. taught them the disgraceful arts

of mercenary politics, as the rich plunder which they took from the duke of Burgundy gave, in some measure, the first taint to that wonderful simplicity of manners, for which they had before been so happily distinguished: till at length, *Swiss venality* has become a kind of proverbial expression.

I am, &c.

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### LETTER XXX.

Avenches, Sept. 13.

**T**HERE is scarcely any antient town that has occasioned more controversy among antiquarians, or that has given rise to such variety of conjectures concerning its origin and importance, as Avenches, the principal burgh of a bailiage in the Pays de Vaud. Some contend that it was the capital of all Helvetia; because Tacitus calls it *Aventicum gentis caput*: while others have endeavoured to prove, that by this expression the historian meant only to denote the capital town of its particular *pagus* or district. Agreeably  
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to some accounts, the city was built, and a Roman colony founded there, by Vespasian : according to others (and with more probability) it was only repaired and beautified by that emperor, after it had been laid waste and almost ruined, by Vitellius.

Without entering however into discussions of this dry and uninteresting kind, this much at least is certain ; that it was formerly a very considerable town, and under the dominion of the Romans. This appears not only from several mile-stones, found in many parts of the Pays de Vaud, most of which are numbered from *Aven-ticum*, as the principal place of reference ; and also from various other inscriptions ; but more particularly from the ruins still existing. I shall slightly mention a few of the latter, merely to shew you it is not without evidence that these good people boast of their antiquity.

We traced the ruins of the ancient walls, which appear to have enclosed a space near five miles in circumference. The present town occupies but a very inconsiderable part of this ground ; the remain-  
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der is covered with corn-fields and meadows. One of the ancient towers still exists: it is a semicircular building, with the convex side turned towards the town.

We were shewn a very curious mosaic pavement, discovered some years ago in ploughing up a field. It is now inclosed by a barn, which being let to some peasants, the ignorant occupiers are taking the most effectual method to destroy this elegant piece of antiquity as fast as possible. We found it strewed all over with tobacco-plants: and indeed they not only cover it with damp herbs, which deaden the colours and rot the pavement; but suffer every person who enters to take away bits. Even the Messrs. of Berne were so insensible of the value of this admirable relic of antient genius, that they permitted the count of Caylus to take up one of the pannels; upon which the figures of two satyrs, represented as embracing, were greatly admired for the exquisite beauty of the execution. The count designed to have conveyed them to Paris, but was disappointed: for, by the unskillfulness of the persons employed in removing them, the pannel was broken to pieces.

This fine mosaic was the floor of an ancient bath, and is about sixty feet in length and forty in breadth: the general form is perfect; and, although several parts are broken off and lost, yet from what remains we could easily trace the configuration of the whole.

The pavement consists of three general compartments: those at each extremity are regularly divided into fifteen octagons, eight small squares, and sixteen small triangles. Five of these octagons in each compartment, represented human figures in various attitudes, but chiefly Bacchanalian men and women: the remaining octagons were composed of three different patterns, answering to each other with great exactness. The vacant parts between the octagons are filled with the small squares; and towards the outward border, with the small triangles above-mentioned. The middle compartment is divided into oblong pannels; in the largest of which is an octagon bath of white marble, of about six feet in diameter, and a foot and an half deep: the sides of the bath are ornamented with dolphins. Of these three compartments one is almost perfect; the  
two

two others are very much defaced. Each of the pannels is encircled with several borders prettily diversified; and a general border encloses the whole.

Schmidt, in his *Recueil d'Antiquités de la Suisse*, ingeniously conjectures, from a *glory* which encircles a head of Bacchus in this mosaic, that it was wrought during some part of the intervening age between Vespasian and Marcus Aurelius; because that mark of divinity is never seen upon any monuments of Roman antiquity prior to that period. He adds, that the same kind of *glory* is observed upon the head of Trajan in an antient painting at Rome; upon that of Antoninus Pius on a medal; and on the arch of Constantine. He strengthens this conjecture, by farther remarking, that the head-dress of one of the Bacchanalian women represented in this mosaic, resembles the head-dress on the medals of the empresses Plotina and Sabina\*.

From thence we were conducted to the

\* The curious reader will find in the *Recueil*, cited in the text, a very accurate description and engraving of this mosaic.

ruins of an antient amphitheatre, within the walls of the bailiff's garden. The general form and size of this building remain tolerably perfect, as also some parts of the walls, which enclosed it. The diameter of the arena might be about eighty yards, as far as we could judge by pacing it; which must necessarily indeed have been a very uncertain estimate: for, one of the former bailiffs filled up the hollow with a considerable quantity of earth, in order to plant it with fruit-trees; wisely conceiving, I suppose, that to have good fruit was of more value, than to be able to determine the precise extent of all the antient amphitheatres that ever existed. Under a tower (part of which is built of Roman materials) is a cell of about 24 feet by 18, and nearly 20 in height, from whence the animals were probably let loose upon the combatants. On the outside are still to be seen the remains of five dens: and all over the walls, which are formed of brick and mortar, there are several pieces of rude sculpture considerably defaced.

Not far from these ruins stands a large  
column

column of white marble, about 50 feet in height, composed of immense masses, nicely joined together without cement; and near it lies scattered a considerable fragment of defaced sculpture: it has much the appearance of having been once the portal of some magnificent temple. At a small distance from this column, in the high road, we observed a cornice, consisting of a large solid block of white marble, which probably belonged to the same building: the sculpture, which is not without merit, represents urns and griffins. As we walked through the town, we remarked several other enormous masses of cornice, ornamented with sea-horses and urns; as also some marble columns of beautiful proportions.

About a mile from Avenches, near the village of Coppet, are the remains of a small aqueduct: it is on the other side of a little stream, which separates the canton of Fribourg from that of Berne. It was discovered about fifteen years ago, by the accidental falling of a hill of sand which covered the aqueduct, and in its fall demolished a part of it. The outside is formed of stones and mortar, and the



inside of a red cement, as hard as the old Roman tile; the vault of the arch may be about two feet and an half high, and one and an half broad. This aqueduct has been traced, to the east-side of the town, and also to near the high marble column before-mentioned. We were informed that it extends to the tower of Gausa, between Vevay and Lausanne; and that between Villarsel and Marnay, about four leagues from Coppet, the solid rock is cut through in an arch of nearly the same dimensions. But whether these several parts actually communicated with each other, or indeed whether they really exist; are facts which, (having only viewed those remains that are visible near this town) I must be contented to rest on the credit of my informers.

I am, &c.

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## L E T T E R   XXXI.

Fribourg, September 14.

**T**HE town of Fribourg was built in 1179, by Berchtold IV. duke of Zæringen, who endowed it with considerable

able privileges. Upon the extinction of the male line of the house of Zæringen, in 1218 \*, Ulric of Kybourg obtained the sovereignty of the town, in right of his wife Anne, sister of the last duke Berchtold V. It came by marriage into the possession of Eberhard count of Habsbourg-Lauffenbourg; who sold it to his cousin Rhodolph of Habsbourg, afterwards emperor, and founder of the house of Austria. During this period a continual rivalry subsisting between Berne

\* The house of Zæringen was descended from the ancient counts of Alsace, by Berchtold count of Brisgaw. His grandson, Berchtold II, built the castle of Zæringen; from which Berchtold III. took the title of duke. That castle was situated near a village of the same name, not far from the present town of Freyburg, capital of the Brisgaw. Berchtold V, the last duke, was chosen emperor in 1198, in opposition to the house of Suabia; but resigned in favour of Philip. Upon his death his territories were divided between his collateral heirs, the dukes of Teck, and his two sisters Agnes and Anne. The former married Egeno, count of Urach; by which marriage he obtained possession of Freyburg in the Brisgaw; and his posterity were called counts of Freyburg. Anne married Ulric, count of Kybourg; their daughter Hedwige, was wife of Albert count of Habsbourg, and mother of the emperor Rodolph I.

and Fribourg, they were frequently engaged in mutual hostilities: at length, however, all differences were composed; and the two cities, in 1403, entered into a perpetual alliance.

Fribourg continued under the dominion of the house of Austria, and was a party in all the quarrels in which that family were engaged with the Swiss republics; until the middle of the fifteenth century; when, by a very singular revolution, it renounced all allegiance to Albert archduke of Austria, and brother to the emperor Frederic III; and put itself under the protection of the duke of Savoy. From this era it occasionally assisted the cantons against the house of Austria; and in the war between the Swiss and Charles the Bold, the troops of this republic had a share in the victories of Grandson and Morat\*. Soon after the last of these battles, the house of Savoy, at the intercession of Berne, renounced all right and title to the town of Fribourg. By this means she became a free and independent republic; and, in 1481, was admitted, together

\* See page 214.

with

with Solothurn, a member of the Helvetic confederacy.

The government of Fribourg is entirely aristocratical, the sovereign and legislative authority being vested in the great council, consisting of 200; the members of which are chosen by that council, and from a few patrician families. The little council of 24, in which resides the executive power; and the secret council, consisting of 60 members; are sub-divisions of the great council. I shall not enter into a minute detail of this government; which resembles (some inconsiderable differences excepted) the other aristocratical states of Switzerland. The most remarkable circumstance that distinguishes it, is the mode of electing the members of the secret and of the little council. The names of the candidates are placed privately in a box, containing as many divisions as there are persons who solicit the charge. Into each of these partitions the suffrages are thrown; and the several electors put in their ballots as chance directs, without knowing to which of the candidates they may happen to give their vote; and he who

who has the most of these casual ballots is chosen. This method has the appearance of effectually guarding against family influence : nevertheless, if it be considered, that the candidate can only be taken from certain families, and under certain restrictions ; it may well be questioned, whether it sufficiently answers the purpose for which it was intended.

This canton is entirely catholic. It is supposed to contain above 60,000 souls, without including the town ; in which there are about 6,000. Its territory consists chiefly of excellent pasture ; produces some corn, and but little wine. The commerce here is too inconsiderable to be mentioned : and literature is by no means in a more flourishing state. The town stands on a hill in a very singular situation, half encircled by the river Sane ; the banks whereof are formed by naked perpendicular rocks ; but the adjacent country exhibits a beautiful variegated scene of rising grounds, rich meadows, and fine forests.

This republic draws considerable subsidies from France, both in money and salt ;

falt; and it is computed that, in proportion to its size, none of the other cantons have so many troops in that service. It has long been a controverted question, whether Swisserland gains or loses by furnishing such numbers of her natives to serve in foreign armies. That the fidelity of these troops is so well recognised, as to be chosen above all others to be the life-guards of several sovereigns; is a circumstance, which in that respect, undoubtedly, redounds much to the honour of the national character of the Swiss: but, on the other hand, to traffic with the blood of their subjects, and let them out, for paltry subsidies, to fight the battles of any king, in any cause; seems to betray a mercenary spirit, uncontrouled by considerations of justice and humanity. It has been urged, that were it not for their furnishing these supplies to foreign nations, Swisserland would be over-stocked with inhabitants; and that the people would be obliged, like the northern hives of old, to emigrate for subsistence: for, in many parts there is no commerce; and the mountainous tracts of this country

cannot

cannot supply sufficient provision for such a numerous people. In reply to this reasoning, it may be alledged, that they do not make use of all the resources in their power: commerce might be more generally cultivated and encouraged; as there is no part of Swisserland which is far removed from some of the principal rivers and great lakes, all of which have a direct communication with the sea.

But, to be convinced that they have not exhausted all the advantages to which they might resort; let them look back on antient Greece, and the immense populousness in so confined a country; or, what is more open to their observation, let them consider the present state of the United Provinces, and the abundance those industrious people enjoy on a tract of land snatched from an element perpetually reclaiming its prior occupancy. But the Swiss need not be sent to antient or foreign nations for examples: they have them much nearer home. Geneva and St. Gallen are, for their extent, exceedingly populous; and yet the natural productions of their lands are by no means sufficient to support

support all the inhabitants. Appenzel is entirely mountainous, as well as the district of Vallengin, nevertheless both those countries are remarkably well peopled; and they derive from the neighbouring nations, by means of their commerce and industry, all the necessaries of life in great abundance. Indeed Swisserland is so far from being over-stocked with people, that in most of the great towns there is a manifest want of inhabitants. Nor is this depopulation confined to the towns alone; for, several parts of this country, and more particularly the Pays de Vaud, are considerably less peopled than they were in the last century; insomuch that hands are frequently wanting for the common purposes of agriculture.

These reflections seem to prove the mistaken policy of Swisserland, in letting out her troops to foreign states: but the evil is too deeply rooted to admit of a speedy cure. Individuals, it is true, make fortunes by this kind of traffic, but the public suffers. Some circumstances, however, may be remarked in its favour; as by this practice the several cantons not only have  
in



in constant reserve, without the least expence, a body of well-disciplined forces, which they can recall at a moment's warning ; but it becomes the interest, for that reason, of those foreign powers, whom they furnish with these troops, not to foment any divisions among the United States, which might render the presence of their troops necessary at home. Add to this, that the privileges which the Swiss enjoy in France, and the very advantageous articles, relating to commerce, secured to them in all their treaties, seem to strengthen the argument for continuing their connections of this kind with that kingdom. — Having thus stated the principal topics, which are urged by the opposite partizans of this controverted question ; I will leave you to determine on which side the balance prevails.

We are now at the small village of Neuchâtel, in our way to Berne : we made a little circuit to this place, in order to see an hermitage, that lies about a league from the town of Fribourg ; and which has been much talked of, on account of the singularity of its construction. It is formed

ed in the solid rock, and the chief curiosity consists in its having been the work of two men: as such, it is an astonishing performance, but, in any other respect, it is hardly worth visiting. In the last century an hermit scooped out a hollow in this rock, just sufficient for him to lie at his full length: but his successor desiring a more commodious mansion, hewed, in the heart of the mountain, a chapel, several apartments, stair-cases, &c. The length of the whole is above 400 feet. One room is 90 feet long, and 20 broad; the steeple of the chapel, if it may be so called, is 80 feet high, and the chimney of the kitchen 90. The hermit who perforated this dwelling in the rock, was near thirty years at the work. What a wretched waste of time and industry! But such is the folly of sequestered superstition, that, for want of better occupations to employ the mind, it frequently has recourse to laborious trifles. The situation of this hermitage is beautiful: the rock in which it is cut, hangs over the river Sane, which meandering through two chains of hills covered with wood, fills up all the valley beneath.

beneath. The present hermit is a German; and with him lives an old soldier, his friend.

From this hermitage to Neuchâtel (at which place the canton of Berne commences) the country is rich, and finely wooded: on our right we had a distant but sublime view of a range of rude rocks, with some glaciers rising above them and closing the prospect. The sun was now going down: the various tints of the evening—the purple gleam upon the naked rocks—and the rays of the setting-sun upon the glaciers, which seemed to glow almost into transparency—cast such a mild and beautiful radiance over this magnificent scene, as even the luminous pencil of that celebrated Grecian artist, who is said to have painted “*quæ pingi non possunt, fulgura & fulgetra,\**” would in vain have attempted to imitate.

I am, &c.

\* Apelles, *vid.* Plin. H. N. lib. 35. c. 10.

LETTER

## L E T T E R XXXII.

**F**ROM the first formation of the Helvetic union, additional cantons were from time to time admitted, until at length the reception of Appenzel finally closed the confederacy. During these intervals, several of those republics, which afterwards became members of the general league, were only allies of some of the particular cantons, enjoying the same privileges, and standing in the same relation, as the present allies and associates of the United States. Among these, Fribourg and Soleure, having, upon the conclusion of the war with Charles the Bold, entered into an alliance with Zurich, Berne, and Lucerne; demanded to be admitted into the Helvetic union. This alliance was considered by the five other combined cantons, as a breach of their antient treaty: accordingly they refused to receive them. The dispute grew warm; hostilities were upon the point of breaking out; when a native of the canton of Underwalden singly effected a reconciliation, and saved his

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country

country from all the impending horrors of a civil war.

The name of this celebrated person was Nicholas de Flue: he had formerly filled the office of landamman of the canton of Underwalden, with the highest advantage to his reputation; but suddenly retiring from the world, in a fit of gloomy superstition unworthy of his virtues and character, he turned hermit, and practised all the severities of that austere mode of life, with the strictest observance. But although the flame of patriotism was smothered in his breast by an ill-directed zeal for mistaken duties, it was not extinguished; and he no sooner heard, in the depth of his solitude, of those public animosities, which threatened a fatal breach between the confederate cantons; than his patriotism prevailed over his superstition, and he quitted his unprofitable hermitage in order to exert those active and public virtues, the very lowest of which singly outweighs whole years of useless and unrequired mortifications. Accordingly, this extraordinary man presented himself before the deputies assembled at Stantz; and so forcibly

cably represented to them, by his conciliating and persuasive eloquence, the destructive consequences that would attend their disunion, that they chose him arbiter of the dispute. The consequence was, that by his sole mediation all differences between the contending parties were amicably settled, and Fribourg and Soleure were received into the Helvetic confederacy. Upon this occasion the eight antient cantons entered into a covenant, called the *Convention of Stantz*; by which the several articles of union and mutual protection were permanently fixed \*.

The

\* Nicholas de Flue, after having so happily composed the public dissensions, returned to his hermitage, and there died. He is buried at Saxelen, a small village in the canton of Unterwalden; and on his tomb is inscribed the following epitaph :

“ Nicholas de Flue quitted his wife and children  
 “ to go into the desert : he served God nineteen  
 “ years and an half without eating any flesh-meat.  
 “ He died 1487.”

This frivolous epitaph strongly marks the bigotted spirit of that age in which it was composed : the narrow-minded author, totally overlooking the patriot in the hermit, saw nothing so truly meritorious in the life of the deceased, as his having suppressed those

The articles to which Fribourg and Soleure acceded upon their admission into the league, together with the above-mentioned convention, are considered, by all the best historians of Switzerland, as the great basis of the federal union between these celebrated states. The subsequent reception of the three other cantons, Basil, Schaffhausen, and Appenzel, made no change therein; they having subscribed to the same terms which Fribourg and Soleure had accepted. Not to enter, however, into a minute detail of this particular convention; I will endeavour to lay before you a short, but clear, view of the general Helvetic confederacy.

The code of public law, if I may so express it, between the combined republics of Switzerland, is founded upon the treaty of \* Sempach in 1393; upon that of Stantz;

social and public energies which dignify human nature, in order to practise the debasing austerities of a superstitious and cloistered religionist !

\* This treaty regulates the articles of war, and was contracted between the eight antient cantons, in conjunction with the republic of Soleure. It ordains, that no Swiss soldier shall quit his ranks in time of

Stantz ; and upon the treaty of peace concluded at Araw, between the protestant and catholic cantons. It appears from these several treaties, which include or enlarge those which preceded, that the Helvetic union is a perpetual *defensive* alliance between the thirteen independent contracting powers, to protect each other by their united forces against all foreign enemies whomsoever. Accordingly, if any member of the union should be attacked, that particular canton has a right to demand succours from the \* whole confederate body ;

of action, even although he should be dangerously wounded :

“ Nous entendons aussi que si quelqu'un s'estoit  
 “ blessé en quelque façon que ce fust en combatant  
 “ ou en assaillant, de sorte qu'il seroit inutile pour  
 “ se deffendre ; il demeurera non obstant aussi avec  
 “ les autres, jusques à ce que la bataille soit ex-  
 “ pirée : et pour cela ne sera estimé fuyard et ne l'en  
 “ fâchera-t-on en sa personne ny en son bien aucu-  
 “ nement.”

\* The respectable author of the *Account of Swisserland*, (the only English publication of merit, concerning Swisserland, that I have met with) has fallen into a mistake in his description of the Helvetic union ; and his error has been adopted by the Abbè Mably,



dy ; and in case of war, the several forces to be supplied by each canton are precisely specified.

in his *Droit Public de l'Europe* ; by the compilers of the *Encyclopedie* ; and by several other writers of distinction.

After having given a description of the Helvetic union, he concludes the relation as follows :

“ So far are they (the thirteen cantons) from making one body or one commonwealth, that only the three old cantons are directly allied with every one of the other twelve. There is indeed such a connection established between them, that, in case any one canton were attacked, all the other twelve would be obliged to march to its succour ; but it would be by virtue of the relation, that two cantons may have to a third, and not of any direct alliance subsisting between every one of them. As for example : of the eight old cantons, Lucerne has a right of calling but five to its succour, in case of attack ; but then some of those five have a right of calling others, with whom they are allied, though Lucerne be not ; so that at last all must march by virtue of particular alliances, and not of any general one amongst them all.”

The above-cited account of the Helvetic union, would better have suited the league of the eight cantons before the convention of Stantz ; when the confederate states were not so absolutely and directly united together as they are at present ; and their alliance did not perhaps totally exclude every treaty of the same kind with other powers. It was only by the

specified. It appears however, from the stipulations to which the five latter cantons agreed, that they do not, in every respect, enjoy equal prerogatives with the eight antient ones. For, the latter reserved to themselves a right, in case the question for declaring war against any foreign state should be *unanimously* carried in their assembly, to require the assistance of the other cantons, without assigning the motive of such their resolution : whereas the former, cannot commence hostilities without the consent of the confederates ; and if the enemy should be willing to enter into a negotiation concerning the matter in dispute, it must be referred to the arbitration of the eight antient cantons. It is farther stipulated, that if a war should break out between the last-mentioned can-

the articles of that celebrated convention, and the alliance of the eight cantons with Fribourg and Soleure, that the union became absolutely fixed and general. It must be confessed, however, that several Swiss historians have given the same idea of the Helvetic union as that above-mentioned : and that even now, authors differ considerably upon some important articles of the league.

tions, the others are to observe a strict neutrality.

The next essential object of the league, is, to preserve peace and good order among the several cantons. It is therefore covenanted, that all public discords of this nature shall be finally settled between the contending parties in an amicable manner: and for this purpose particular judges and arbiters are expressly appointed, and empowered to compose the dissensions that may happen to arise. To this is added, a reciprocal guarantee of the forms of government established in the respective commonwealths: for, by the convention of Stantz it was agreed, in order to prevent internal factions and revolts in any of the allied cantons, that, in case of rebellion, the magistracy of such canton should be assisted by the forces of the others. Accordingly, the history of Switzerland affords many instances of protection and assistance reciprocally given between the confederates, in defence and support of the constitution of particular cantons.

No separate engagement whatsoever, which any of the cantons may enter into,

to, can be valid, if inconsistent with the fundamental articles of this general union : or in other words, the reciprocal contract between the members of the league, supersedes every other species of public obligation. With the foregoing exceptions, the several combined states are distinct from, and independent of, each other : they may contract alliances with any power, or reject the same, although all the others have acceded to it \* ; may grant auxiliary troops to foreign princes ; may prohibit the money of the other cantons from being current within their own territories ; may im-

\* The five cantons which agreed not to conclude any treaty without the consent of the eight, are necessarily excluded from this power, together with those particular cantons, which have bound themselves by private treaties not to contract any foreign alliance, without the reciprocal consent of the others ; as for instance, Uri, Schwëitz, and Underwalden, by the alliance at Brunnen in 1715. But this depends upon particular treaties, and has no relation to the general union. In fact, every canton is restrained by the general articles of the Helvetic union : but, conforming to those, no one republic is controuled by the resolutions of the majority of the confederate cantons, in any other instance whatsoever.

pose

pose taxes; and, in short, perform every other act of absolute sovereignty.

The public affairs of the Helvetic body and their allies are discussed and determined in the several diets; and these are,

I. The general diets; or general assemblies of the thirteen cantons, and of their allies.

II. The particular diets; as those of the eight antient cantons; those of the protestant cantons, with the deputies of the protestants of Glaris and Appenzel, of the towns of St. Gallen, Bienne, and Mülhausen, called the *evangelical conferences*; those of the Roman catholic cantons with the deputies of the catholics of Glaris and Appenzel, of the abbot of St. Gallen, and of the republic of the Vallais, called the *golden alliance*: as also several others of particular cantons, which, besides being members of the general confederacy, have distinct and separate alliances with each other.

The ordinary meetings of the *general diet* are held once a year, and continue sitting one month; the extraordinary ones are summoned upon particular occasions.

This

This diet is principally convened to deliberate upon the best measures for the security of the Helvetic body. The canton of Zurich appoints the time and place of the meeting; and convokes the deputies by a circular letter. The deputy of the last-mentioned canton also presides, unless the diet is holden in the territory of any of the other cantons; in which case, the deputy of that canton in which the assembly meets, is president.

This diet formerly assembled at Baden; but since the conclusion of the civil war in 1712, between Zurich and Berne on one side, and Lucerne, Uri, Schwytz, Unterwalden, and Zug, on the other, (when the five latter renounced the co-regency of Baden) the diets have been holden at Frauenfeld in Thurgaw. Each canton sends as many deputies as it thinks proper.

It would be descending into a tedious detail, and trespassing too much on your patience, were I to enter into the particular connections which the several allies have either with the whole Helvetic body, or with some of the cantons; and the different

ferent nature of these respective alliances. Suffer me only to remark in general, that the allies may be divided into associate, and into confederate states : of the former, are the abbot and town of St. Gallen, the towns of Bienne and Mulhausen : of the latter, are the Grisons, and the republic of the Vallais ; the town and republic of Geneva ; the principality of Neuchatel, and the bishop of Basil.

The states thus comprised under the general denomination of associates and confederates, enjoy, by virtue of this union, a total independence on all foreign dominion ; and partake of all the privileges and immunities granted to the Swiss in other countries. And notwithstanding some of these states are allied only with some particular cantons ; yet in case any of them should be attacked, those cantons with whom they are in alliance would not only supply them with succours, but would also require the joint assistance of the other cantons : so that by these means, should any one member of the whole body be attacked, all the others would come to its defence,

defence, either as guarantees themselves, or as auxiliaries of the actual guarantees \*.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

Berne, Sept, 16.

I Was very much struck, upon my entrance into Berne, with its singular neatness and beauty : I do not remember to have seen any town (Bath alone except,

\* If the reader should be desirous of a more distinct information concerning the Helvetic league ; he is referred to Stannyan's account of Swisserland, published in 1714 ; but more particularly to the article *Corps Helvétique*, in the *Dictionnaire de la Suisse*, last edition ; which article, as well as those of Berne, Geneva, and Neuchatel, are admirably well drawn up.

It is chiefly from the last-mentioned work, as also from Watteville's *Histoire de la Confédération Helvétique*, from Fafis's *Staats und Erd-Beschreibung der ganzen Helvetischen Eidgenossenschaft*, and from the several treaties between the cantons in Du Mont's *Corps Diplomatique*, that the above general account of the Helvetic union has been extracted. The truth of those relations have been confirmed to the author by some Swiss gentlemen, well versed in the general constitution of their country.

ed)



ed) the first appearance whereof had so pleasing an effect. The principal street is broad and long : the houses are mostly uniform, built of a greyish stone upon arcades, which are admirably well paved. Through the middle of the street runs a lively stream of the clearest water, in a channel constructed for its reception : but besides this stream, it abounds with fountains not less ornamental to the place than beneficial to the inhabitants. The river Aar flows close by the town, and indeed almost surrounds it ; winding its serpentine course over a rocky bottom much below the level of the streets ; and for a considerable way forming by its banks, which are very steep and craggy, a kind of natural rampart. The cathedral church is a noble piece of Gothic architecture : it stands upon a platform that has been raised at a great expence from the bed of the river ; and which commands as fine a view as any I have seen in Swisserland.

The country around is richly cultivated, and agreeably diversified with hills, lawns, wood, and water ; the river flows rapidly below, and an abrupt chain of high and rugged

rugged alps appears at some distance, the tops whereof are covered with eternal snow. Such an assemblage of beautiful objects would in any view present a most striking prospect; but its effect becomes greatly heightened when seen from the midst of a large town.

All the public buildings are in a most noble simplicity of style, and announce the riches and grandeur of the republic. The arsenal contains arms for sixty thousand men, besides a considerable quantity of cannon, which were cast here. The granary is an excellent institution, similar to that of Zurich; but it differs from that of Geneva, as the expence does not fall chiefly upon the poor: for, the bakers are not compelled by government to purchase their corn from the public magazine. This reservoir, if I may be allowed the expression, always contains a large provision of that commodity; which is supplied, in consequence of particular agreements for that purpose, by France, Sardinia, and Holland; and out of which they partly furnish Geneva, Neuchatel, and Basil. The hospitals, which are large, airy, and well built,  
are

are excellently regulated, both with respect to the care and attention paid to the sick, and to the cleanliness of the several wards. The town is kept neat by a number of felons, who are sentenced to this drudgery during a certain time, according to the nature of their offences; and, as capital condemnations are very rare, this is the most usual manner of punishing their criminals. These culprits are distinguished by an iron collar, with a hook projecting over their heads.

The library is a small but well-chosen collection, and contains some very curious manuscripts: of these, Mr. Sinner, a man of great erudition, has published a very satisfactory and judicious catalogue. He has not only set forth their titles, and ascertained their age, but has also given a general and succinct account of their respective subjects; and from many of them has published extracts equally curious and interesting. Among these MSS. are some of the thirteenth century, consisting of several songs and romances of the Troubadours, written in that and the preceding ages, which merit the attention of those

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who

who are conversant in that species of ancient poetry.

I have been much disappointed in not seeing the great Haller: his very infirm state of health would not admit of his receiving a visit from us\*. I need not tell you how eminently that celebrated author has distinguished himself in every species of polite literature, and in several branches of natural philosophy. Unlike certain minute philosophers of the present age, whose atheistical and infidel writings are too well known and too widely diffused; this great man is so unfashionable as to have followed the steps of a Locke and a Newton; and to have proved himself, both in his life and his writings, a zealous friend and able advocate of christianity. When literature and philosophy, instead of being employed, as they too often have been, in supporting sceptical tenets by artful sophistry, thus lend their joint assistance to the cause of religion; it is then only that they become an honour to the possessor, and a benefit to society.

Learning is neither so universally encouraged, nor so successfully cultivated here

\* He died the beginning of the year 1778.

as at Zurich ; the academical studies are almost solely directed to those branches of knowledge more essentially necessary for entering into the church. The society for the promotion of agriculture, is almost the only establishment that directly tends to the progress of the arts and sciences : and even this meets with no great countenance from government. There is but little trade in the capital : some few manufactures indeed (chiefly of linen and silk) have been established ; but they are carried on by those only who have no prospect of being admitted into the sovereign council. For, those families who have any influence in public affairs, would hold themselves degraded, were they to engage in any branch of commerce ; and as offices of the state, except bailliages, are in general not very profitable, nor indeed numerous, many of them enter, as their sole resource, into foreign armies. With respect to those among them who have sufficient interest to be chosen into the sovereign council ; they must have attained the full age of twenty-nine before they are eligible : in the meanwhile, as very few of them apply their minds to literary pursuits ; they usually,  
from

from mere want of employment, waste the interval in an idle and dissipated course of life. Nevertheless, there are several members of the sovereign council, who are justly distinguished for their political abilities: and, being thoroughly acquainted with the respective interests of the different powers of Europe, they know perfectly well how to avail themselves of every conjuncture which may be turned to the advantage, or the glory, of their own republic.

The inhabitants of Berne value themselves much upon their politeness to strangers: and indeed it is but doing them strict justice to acknowledge, that they have shewn us (with that peculiar frankness and unaffected affability, I have so often had occasion to admire in the Swiss) every civility in their power.

According to the historians of Berne, this town was built by Berchtold V, duke of Zæringen; and was, from its foundation, an imperial city. Upon the death of the duke in 1218, the emperor Frederic II. conferred upon the inhabitants considerable privileges, and drew up also a code of legislation, which forms the basis of their present civil laws. The liberty

which this town enjoyed, attracted great numbers of inhabitants from the adjacent country, who found here a sure asylum from the oppression of the nobles. From its first foundation, Berne was engaged in perpetual wars with its neighbours, and for some time with the house of Austria: notwithstanding which, the town continued to aggrandise itself by degrees, and considerably to enlarge its territory. In the year 1352, Berne acceded to the Helvetic confederacy; and so great was its power, even at that early period, that it obtained the second rank after Zurich, among the allied states. Since the acquisition of the Pays de Vaud, the domains of this canton form nearly the third part of Switzerland, and about the fourth of its actual population: it contains about three hundred and fifty thousand souls, besides about eleven thousand in the capital. By the introduction of the reformation into the town in 1528, the government acquired a large increase of its revenues, arising from the ecclesiastical possessions, which were very considerable. Not long after that period, the whole canton followed the example of the capital, and the reformed religion

religion was universally established throughout its extensive dominions.

The Pays de Vaud having been conquered from the house of Savoy, as the German division of the ~~canton~~ was from the states of the empire; justice is administered, and the taxes regulated in those two provinces by a set of laws and customs peculiar to each: for, they have respectively preserved the several distinct usages which were in force among them before they came into the possession of Berne. Each of these divisions has its treasurer and its chamber of appeal, resident at Berne: the chamber of appeal belonging to the Pays de Vaud, judges in the last resort; but the inhabitants of the German district may again appeal from theirs to the sovereign council.

I am, &c.

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#### L E T T E R XXXIV.

**W**ERE I to attempt entering into an exact disquisition concerning the government of Berne; my letter would not

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only exceed its proper limits, but would hardly be contained within the extent of an ordinary pamphlet. I am persuaded, therefore, you will readily excuse me from putting your patience to so tedious a trial : but you would probably think me very inconsistent indeed, if, after having already, in the course of our correspondence, descended, too minutely perhaps, into less interesting details ; I should totally pass over in silence a government, the wisdom of whose administration is so generally and so justly admired. Let me endeavour then, sensible as I am of my inability to treat the subject as it deserves, to sketch at least the general outlines of this constitution.

The sovereign power resides in the great council of two hundred ; which when complete consists of 299 members. They are chosen from the burghers of the town ; from whom they are considered as deriving their power, and as acting by deputation. The authority with which they are invested, is in some respects the most absolute and uncontrouled of any of the aristocratical states of Swisserland. The government of Lucerne is called, indeed, the most aristocratical of all the cantons ;  
and

and it may be so, perhaps, with respect to the small number of families, to which the administration of affairs is entrusted : but no war can be declared, no ~~peace con-~~cluded, no alliance made, no taxes imposed, without the consent of their burghers in a general assembly. At Fribourg and Soleure the burghers are likewise convened upon particular occasions. Whereas the sovereign council of Berne (and it is a peculiarity which distinguishes it from all the other similar republics in the confederate cantons) is restrained by no constitutional check of this kind ; as a general assembly of the burghers is never convened for any purpose whatsoever.

The executive powers of government are delegated by the sovereign council to the senate, or smaller council chosen by themselves out of their own body : the former assembles ordinarily three times a week, and extraordinarily upon particular occasions ; the latter every day, Sundays excepted.

The senate, comprising the two advoyers, or chiefs of the republic, is composed of twenty-seven members : and from this select body are taken the principal magis-

trates of the commonwealth. When a vacancy happens in this senate, the mode of election is as follows :—Twenty-six balls, ~~three of which~~ are golden, are put into a box, and drawn by the several members : those who draw the three golden ones, nominate three electors out of their body. In the same manner of balloting, seven members are chosen from the great council, who also nominate seven electors out of their own body. These ten electors fix upon a certain number of candidates, not exceeding ten, nor less than six ; and those among these candidates, who have the fewest votes in the sovereign council, retire, till their number is reduced to four : then four balls, two golden and two silver, are drawn by the four remaining candidates ; the two who draw the former are put in nomination, and he who has the greatest number of suffrages in the sovereign council, is chosen. But in order to be eligible, the candidate must have been a member of the great council ten years, and must be married.

The sovereign council is generally filled up every ten years ; as within that period there is usually a deficiency of eighty members

bars to complete the whole number of two hundred and ninety-nine: and this council determines the time of election, by vote. That point being settled, each ~~ad-~~voyer nominates two of the new members; each seizenier, and each member of the senate, one apiece: two or three other officers of state have likewise the same privilege. There is also a certain number of persons who claim, by virtue of their offices, a right of being elected: and their claim is generally admitted. These several nominations and pretensions, commonly amount, in the whole, to about fifty of the new members: the remaining vacancies are filled up by the suffrages of the senate, and the seizeniers.

The *Seizeniers* are sixteen members of the great council, drawn yearly from the abbayes or tribes; two from each of the four great ones, and one from each of the remaining eight. The candidates are generally \* taken from those who have exercised

\* I say *generally*, because it is not absolutely fixed, that all the seizeniers must have been bailiffs: for it happens, that in one tribe there are two persons, one of whom has been a bailiff, and the other is a member  
of

exercised the office of bailiffs ; and they are elected, not by a plurality of voices, but by lot. Every year during three days at ~~Easten~~, all other employments in the state are supposed to cease, except those of the bannerets and the seizeniers, who, during this suspension, are invested with a power similar to that of the Roman censors ; and in case of mal-administration may deprive any member of the great council, or of the senate, of his seat : but it is a power which they never exercise. However, should they think proper to exert it, their sentence must be confirmed by the sovereign council.

The principal magistrates are, two advoyers, the two treasurers, and the four bannerets : they are each of them chosen by a majority of voices in the sovereign council, and are yearly confirmed in their respective offices. The advoyers hold their post for life ; the treasurers, six years ; and

of the great council ; they draw lots for the charge. And should a member of the great council be the only one of his tribe, he becomes seizenier of course, provided he be eligible. In order to be seizenier, the candidate must be married, and have neither his father or brother in the senate.

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the bannerets, four. At Easter the advoyer in office delivers up his authority, in full council, to his colleague. The *reigning* advoyer, as he is called, has ~~a particular~~ seat assigned to him in ~~the~~ council-chamber, somewhat elevated, under a canopy : the seal of the republic lies upon the table before him. He never delivers his opinion except it is demanded ; and he has no vote unless the numbers are equal ; and in that case, he has the casting voice. The advoyer out of office, is the first senator in rank, and president of the secret council.

The two treasurers, one for the German district, and the other for the Pays de Vaud, form, in conjunction with the four bannerets, an œconomical chamber, or council of finances : this council examines and passes the accounts of the bailiffs, and receives the revenues of all others, that are accountable to government. The four bannerets, together with the advoyer out of office, as also the senior treasurer, and two members of the senate, compose a committee or secret council ; in which all state affairs, that require greater secrecy than is likely to be observed in so numerous a  
body

body as the sovereign council, are discussed :  
and they have the power of determining  
upon points of very considerable import-  
ance.

I have only described (and as concisely  
as I was able, consistently with giving  
you a general idea of their nature) these  
eight magistracies, as being the chief offices  
of the state, and exercised by members of  
the senate. But notwithstanding that the  
general form of this constitution, is entirely  
aristocratical; and though the senate pos-  
sesses a very considerable influence; yet it  
does not enjoy that almost exclusive au-  
thority, which is observable in the govern-  
ments of Lucerne, Fribourg, and Soleure.  
For, by several wise and well-observed re-  
gulations, the sovereign council, although  
it delegates the most important concerns  
of government to the senate, yet assembles,  
at stated times, and superintends the admi-  
nistration of public affairs. In short, the  
sovereign council of Berne constantly con-  
venes and exercises its authority, indepen-  
dent of the senate.

The administration is carried on, through-  
out the several departments of government,  
with a wonderful precision; and every or-  
dinance

dinance is executed with as much dispatch as in a monarchical state. The aristocratical form is frequently, of all modes of government, the most oppressive to the people; as, instead of one despot, they are liable to suffer under the tyranny of many. But this objection will not hold with respect to Berne, or any other of the aristocratical states of Switzerland: they are, each of them, administered with great wisdom and moderation; and the respective rulers are particularly cautious not to encroach upon the privileges of the subject.

The canton of Berne is divided into a certain number of districts, called baillivages; over which, bailiffs, are chosen from the sovereign council; and, as these are the most profitable posts under the government, they are the great objects of general pursuit. Formerly the bailiffs were elected by the majority of voices in the council; but as this method rendered the members entirely dependent upon those who had the chief credit and influence in the commonwealth, a law passed in 1712, which altered the mode of election; and they are now chosen by lot. No competitor however can be received as a candidate,  
in



in opposition to one who has been longer a member of the sovereign council than himself: for instance, he who was admitted a member in 1766, cannot stand against one who was chosen in 1756. None but married men are capable of being elected into this office, nor can any person be chosen more than once for the principal bailiages; those of a less valuable kind may be possessed three times.

The several bailiffs are representatives of the sovereign power in their respective districts. Accordingly, they put in force the edicts of government; collect the public revenues; act as justices of the peace; and are judges in civil and criminal causes, except where there is any local jurisdiction. However, in civil causes, beyond a certain value, an appeal lies to the courts of Berne: and in criminal ones, the process, after it is made out in the bailiff's court, undergoes a revision in the senate, who refer it to the criminal chamber; and having received the report, pass sentence finally; unless in capital cases, when their sentence must be confirmed by the sovereign council. The bailiff delivers in his accounts to the economical chamber, to which court an appeal

appeal lies, in case of exaction; either on the part of the bailiff, or of his officers: and with respect to those misdemeanors that are punishable by fine, and of which the bailiff is entitled to a share; the quantum of the respective penalties is settled by the legislature, with the most scrupulous exactness, and not left to the arbitrary decision of an interested judge.

From all these considerations it should seem, that every possible precaution has been taken by government to prevent the extortions of the bailiffs: but instances have not been wanting to prove, that these laws and regulations, wise and strict as they are, may be eluded. Indeed there appears to be one circumstance, which must render appeals for redress against the exactions of the bailiffs (unless of the most notorious and flagrant kind) not always sure of being heard with impartiality; the council of two hundred, before whom these appeals are finally brought, consisting of members, who either have been, who are, or who expect to be, bailiffs: and thus the judges are in some measure interested to screen the offenders. It must be acknowledged, that this is one of the greatest

est defects in the administration of justice; nevertheless, its ill-consequence in the government of Bern, has been much exaggerated by some writers; as it is certain, that where bailiffs have been guilty of oppressions, frequent examples occur of their being impartially and severely punished.

The profits of this office arise from a certain portion of the different taxes and duties, paid to government in the respective baillages. In the German division of the canton, the bailiff is entitled, upon the death of every peasant, to a certain determinate part of the inheritance: his share, it is true, is very inconsiderable; nevertheless, in some situations it may prove a very distressing and oppressive tax upon the family. However, this is the only instance I have met with, where the peasants are liable to any imposition, which can justly be deemed grievous.

Sumptuary laws are in force throughout this canton; and the wearing of gold, silver, lace, &c. and even of silk, is expressly prohibited. The *chamber of reform*, however, has found it necessary, upon some occasions, to relax the rigour of these laws. Indeed, the vast strides, which luxury has

made within this century, is very perceivable throughout Switzerland: and there is no place where its progress has been more rapid than at Berne. The attention of government has not been wanting to restrain it; as appears by the laws that have repeatedly been enacted for that purpose: an attention, however, which in many instances has not proved altogether as successful, as it was well directed; notwithstanding the sovereign council has given the several fines incurred by those persons who transgress these ordinances, to the members of the *chamber of reform*. In one respect, however, their laudable endeavours have been more effectual. Not long ago the spirit of gaming had arisen in Berne to such an extravagant height, as to have overwhelmed several families in total ruin. Upon this occasion the sovereign council interposed its authority, by very salutary regulations: and, in order to enforce the observance of them the more strictly, every member of that council is obliged to take an oath, by which he swears that he will inform against any transgressor that comes within his observation. By this law all public games

of hazard are expressly prohibited, and in other kind of games, the parties are restrained from playing for more than a certain sum particularly specified.

Although there are no standing armies in Switzerland, yet in many of the cantons, and particularly in this, the militia is so well regulated, that government could assemble a very considerable body of men at a moment's warning. To this end, every male towards the age of sixteen is enrolled in the militia; and about a third of the whole number are formed into particular regiments, composed of fusileers and electionaries; the former consisting of bachelors, and the latter of married men. Every person thus enrolled, is obliged to provide himself, at his own expence, with an uniform, a musket, and a certain quantity of powder and ball: and no peasant is allowed to marry, unless he produces his uniform and his arms. Every year a certain number of officers, who are called Land Majors, are deputed by the council of war, throughout the canton, to inspect the arms of the soldiers, to complete the regiments; and to exercise the militia: and upon their return they make their report to that council.

council. Besides this annual review, the regiments are occasionally exercised by particular veteran soldiers, appointed for that purpose.

Besides the arms which are kept in the arsenal of Berne, there is also a certain quantity in the arsenal of each bailliage, sufficient for the militia of that district; and likewise a sum of money amounting to three months pay, which is appropriated to the electionaries in case of actual service. The dragoons are chosen from the substantial farmers; as each person is obliged to provide his own horse and accoutrements. In time of peace, the advocate out of office, is president of the council of war; and a member of that council is commander of the militia of the Pays de Vaud; but in time of war a general in chief is nominated, who commands all the forces of the republic.

A certain number of regiments being thus always in readiness, signals are fixed on the highest part of each bailliage, for the assembling of the militia at a particular place appointed for that purpose in each district; and there they receive orders where to march.

Swelled as my letter already is to an immoderate size, and much more so than I intended, yet I cannot forbear trying your patience a little longer, just to mention an institution, which strikes me as well for its singularity as for its utility: I mean what is called the *exterior state*. It is a model in miniature (if I may so express myself) of the sovereign council, and resembles its prototype in every circumstance. This exterior state is composed of those burghers, who have not attained the age requisite for entering into the council of two hundred: they assemble frequently, and go through all the regular forms of government. They have their great council, their senate, their two advoyers, regent and non-regent, their treasurers, their bannerets, their seizeniers; in short, every magistrate and officer of state which belong to the constitution; all of whom are chosen in the usual manner, and with the accustomed ceremonies. The post of advoyer in this mimic community is solicited with great assiduity, and sometimes obtained at a considerable expence; as the successful candidate is sure of being admitted into the great council of two hundred,

hundred, without any farther recommendation. This body possesses a certain number of bailliages, which consist of several ruined castles dispersed over the canton : it has also its common treasure, and its debts. In this latter article, however, it by no means resembles the actual government of Berns ; which is not only free from debts, but possessed of a very considerable fund in reserve.

This remarkable institution, may be considered as a political seminary for the youth of Berne. It renders them acquainted with the constitution of their country ; and, as in their frequent assemblies the several members debate upon all kinds of political subjects, it affords them an opportunity of exercising and improving their talents ; and by that means of becoming more capable of serving the public, whenever they may be admitted to a share in the administration of government.

I am, &c.



## L E T T E R   XXXV.

Langenau, Sept. 18.

**Y**OU have heard, perhaps, of Michel Schuppach, the famous Swiss doctor ; of whose sagacity in discovering the seat of disorders, and applying suitable remedies to them, many wonderful stories are recounted by travellers, and which generally, I suppose, have encreased in the marvellous, like Virgil's Progress of Fame, in proportion as they receded from the scene of action. I am now lodged in the house of this celebrated *Æsculapius* : it is situated above the village of Langenau, on the side of a steep mountain ; and from that circumstance he is generally known by the appellation of *the physician of the mountain*.

Upon our arrival here we found the doctor in his apartment, surrounded by a number of peasants, who were consulting him upon their respective complaints ; each having brought with him a small bottle, containing some of his water : for, it is by inspecting the urine that this medical sage pretends to judge of the state of the patient.

tient. His figure is extremely corpulent; he has a penetrating eye; and one of the best-humoured countenances I ever saw. He sets himself opposite to the person who consults him, one moment examining the water, and the next the patient; and continues regarding alternately the one and the other for some time, always whistling during the intervals. He then opens the state of the case, acquaints the consultant with the nature of his complaints, and has often the good fortune to hit upon the true cause. In a word, his knack of discovering disorders by urine, has gained such implicit faith in his skill, that one might as well doubt of the Pope's infallibility before a zealous catholic, as of the doctor's in the presence of his patients. He has certainly performed several great cures; and the rumour of them hath brought him patients from all quarters of Europe. There are at this time in his house, and in the village, several English and French people, together with many Swiss, who are come hither for his advice.

The doctor was formerly, it seems, a village surgeon, has a slight tincture of

anatomy, and is esteemed as proficient in botany and chemistry; but his reputation as a physician has now been established some years. He is said to have but little acquaintance with the theory of physic: the greatest part of his knowledge being derived from his extensive practice, notwithstanding he never stirs a quarter of a mile from his own house; for he would not take the trouble of going to Bernes, even to attend the King of France.

It is more than probable, that much of this extraordinary man's success in his practice, is owing to the great faith of his patients, to the benefit they receive from change of climate, to the salubrious air of this mountain, and to the amusement arising from that constant succession of different company which assemble in this place, in order to apply to him for assistance. But whatever may have been the causes of his celebrity, it has come to him, as all accounts agree, unsought for by himself. He has certainly many excellent qualities: humane and charitable to the highest degree; he not only furnishes the indigent patients who consult him, with medicines gratis, but generally

generally makes them a present in money besides; and he always appropriates a certain portion of his gains to the poor of his parish. His wife, as also his granddaughters who live with him, are dressed like the peasant women of the country; and he has shewn his good sense in giving the latter no better than a plain education: the eldest he bestowed in marriage, when she was but fifteen, upon one of his assistants, and gave with her 1,300 l.; no inconsiderable portion for this country. He procured a match for her so early, he said, to prevent her being spoiled by the young gentlemen telling her she was pretty, and inspiring her with the ambition of marrying above her rank.

If domestic harmony, and the most perfect simplicity of manners, have any pretensions to please, you would be highly delighted with this rural family. The wife is a notable, active woman, and not only superintends all the household affairs with remarkable cleverness, but even performs great part of the business with her own hands: she assists her husband likewise in making up his medicines; and as he talks no other language than the Swiss

German,

German,

German, she serves occasionally as his interpreter. And, as a proof of his confidence in her administration of his affairs, she acts also as his treasurer; and receives all his fees; which, in the course of a year, amount to a considerable sum: for though he never demands more than the price of his medicines, yet no gentleman consults him without giving him an additional gratuity. Many presents have likewise been made to herself, from persons who have reaped benefit by her husband's prescriptions: several of these consist of valuable trinkets, with which on days of ceremony she decks herself forth to the best advantage, in the simple dress of the country.

The family sit down to table regularly at twelve o'clock; there are always some strangers of the party, consisting not only of a certain number of persons who are under the doctor's care, but of travellers like ourselves, who are led hither by motives of mere curiosity. When the weather is fine, and their guests more numerous than usual, dinner is served out of doors in an open shed, that looks upon one side of the mountain and the adjacent

cent

cent country, with a distant view of the glaciers beyond the lake of Thun. Yesterday some peasants, whom the doctor had invited, formed part of our company ; after dinner, he gave some money to those that sat near him, and ordered one of his grand-daughters to distribute his bounty to the others. The benevolence of the old man, his gaiety and good-humour, the cheerfulness of his family, the gratitude of the poor peasants, the beauty of the prospect, and the fineness of the weather, formed all together the most agreeable and delightful scenes I ever beheld ; and I do not remember in my whole life to have partaken of any meal with a more sensible and heart-felt satisfaction.

This singular man is very often employed in giving his advice from eight in the morning till six in the evening, with no other intermission than during the time he is at table. His drugs are of the best kind ; for he collects the simples, as well as distills them, himself. His house, like those of the peasants, is constructed of wood ; and, though always full of people, is remarkably neat and clean. In short, every thing about him has the appearance

ance of the pleasing simplicity of former ages.

I had almost forgotten to tell you, that I consulted him this morning myself; and assuredly I have reason to be highly satisfied with his prescription: for, he told me I was in such good health, that the only advice he had to give me, was, "to eat and drink well, to dance, be merry, and take moderate exercise."

It is now Langenau fair, and the village is crowded with the neighbouring peasants. Great numbers of the men have long beards, and many of them cover their heads with a woman's straw hat, extremely broad, which gives them a very grotesque appearance: their dress is chiefly a coarse brown cloth jacket without sleeves; with large puffed breeches of ticking. The women wear their hair plaited behind in tresses, with the riband hanging down below the waist; a flat plain straw hat, which is very becoming; a red or brown cloth jacket without sleeves; a black or blue petticoat bordered with red and scarcely reaching below the knees; and stockings with black clocks, and no heels to their shoes: their shifts fastened close

round the throat by a black collar with red ornaments; the better sort have chains of silver between the shoulders, brought round under each arm, and fastened beneath the bosom, the ends hanging down with some silver ornaments.

I am so charmed with the situation of this village, the cheerfulness and singularity of this rustic and agreeable family, and the uncommon character of the humane doctor, that I could with pleasure continue here some days more: but I am pressed for time, and have a long journey before me.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XXXVI.

Geneva, Sept. 26.

I TOOK leave of my friends at Lamgenau, in order to proceed to Avignon; where I am going to pay a visit to the *Abbé de Sade*, author of the interesting memoirs of the life of Petrarch. A respectable and knowing old gentleman of boldness, one of the members of their sovereign council, with whom I had the good



good fortune to fall into acquaintance during my stay at the doctor's, offered me a place in his carriage to Berne : and, as my principal object in travelling is to acquire all the useful intelligence I can by any means obtain ; I very gladly embraced this opportunity of leading my worthy and well-informed companion into a conversation, not only concerning the government of Soleure in particular, but in relation also to Swisserland in general. I found him exceedingly well-disposed to give me all possible satisfaction, in answer to the several questions he very obligingly allowed me to propose to him.

In the afternoon I saw a most curious collection in natural history, belonging to Mr. Springling of Berne : it consisted of about 200 specimens, in fine preservation, of birds both local and migratory, that are found in Swisserland. Amongst others, I observed the common eagle, the golden vulture, the *emberiza nivalis* of Linnæus, and the snow hen, whose feathers in winter are perfectly white, and in summer spotted.

The next day I repassed through Morat and Avenches, and slept at Payerne, a town

town in the canton of Berne, which enjoys considerable privileges. Upon the bridge over the Broye, is an antient Roman inscription: as I was endeavouring to decypher it, a plain-looking man accosted me in a very solemn tone of voice, and said, he had often tried to make out the inscription; and though he could read very well, and had a smattering in Latin, he could never make any thing of it. "For," added he, "what can be the meaning of N and I and O, and all those great letters, which seem to have no connection with each other? Give me a page of plain Latin, and I know what I am about; I will translate it to you from the beginning to the end; but for these Ns, Is and Os; take my word for it, notwithstanding all your pains, you will never be a jot the wiser." However, as I did not seem disposed to follow his advice, but continued decyphering the inscription (which was by no means a difficult task) he appeared astonished at my obstinacy, and left me, with an apparent air of pity, to my hopeless fortune.

Moudon is an handsome town, the principal burgh of a bailliage of the same name,

and formerly the capital of all that part of the Pays de Vaud, which belonged to the Duke of Savoy. It was also the ordinary residence of his chief bailiff, and the place where the assembly of the states were accustomed to meet: at present it contains nothing remarkable. The bailiff appointed by the sovereign council of Berne, resides in the castle of Lucens, built upon the summit of a mountain, in a situation exceedingly picturesque. This castle formerly belonged to the bishops of Lausanne, and was one of their favourite seats before the reformation was introduced into these parts.

At Lausanne I had proposed to cross the Lake of Geneva to Meillerie; intending to go in quest of that romantic spot described by St. Preux in Rousseau's *Eloise*, and which a countryman of ours assured me he had discovered: from thence I meant to coast along the southern side of the lake, and touch upon the several towns of Chablais. Every thing was prepared for this expedition; but unfortunately a sudden change of weather put an end to these amusing projects; no waterman would undertake to carry me. The lake

lake indeed was agitated with a most violent storm, similar to that which is described in the letter I have mentioned; and I had no inclination to hazard the danger for the sake of satisfying a mere fanciful curiosity. Accordingly I made the best of my way by land to Craffi, through the same beautiful variety of country I had passed before, and which cannot be reviewed too often.

In my way to Geneva the day following, I dined with an Englishman at Genethoud; where I expected to have had the permission of waiting upon Mr. Bonnet, the celebrated naturalist; to whom I was very ambitious of being known. Unfortunately, however, his wife was taken ill; and I was debarred the great satisfaction I had proposed to myself, of seeing and conversing with so deservedly eminent a philosopher, whose indefatigable industry in searching into the several phenomena of nature, is equalled only by his ingenuity in explaining them.

The town of Geneva lies upon the narrowest part of the extremity of the lake, where the Rhone issues out in two large and rapid streams, which soon afterwards

unite. That river divides the town into two unequal parts; receives the muddy Arve in its course; and flows through part of France into the Mediterranean. *Here* its waters are of a most beautiful transparent blue, like those of the Rhine when it flows from the lake of Constance. The adjacent country is uncommonly picturesque; and I could not sufficiently admire the magnificent views it exhibits: the several objects which composed this enchanting prospect, were, the town; the lake; the numerous hills and mountains, particularly the Saleve and the Mole, rising suddenly from the plain in a wonderful variety of fantastic forms, backed by the glaciers of Savoy, with their frozen tops glistening in the sun; and the majestic Mont Blanc lifting up its head far above the rest.

The town, which lies partly in the plain upon the borders of the lake, and partly upon a gentle ascent, is irregularly built; the houses are high, and most of those which stand in the trading part of the city, have arcades of wood, which are raised up to their tops. These arcades, which are supported by pillars, obstruct the streets, and

and give them a gloomy appearance; but they are useful to the inhabitants in protecting them from the sun and the rain. Geneva is by far the most populous town in Switzerland: for, Zurich, which comes next to it in respect of population, contains scarcely thirteen thousand souls; whereas the inhabitants of this place amount to twenty-four thousand. This superiority is undoubtedly owing to the greater industry and activity of the inhabitants; to its more extensive commerce; to the facility of purchasing the burghership, and to the privileges which government allows to all foreigners who settle here. The members of this city are distinguished into citizens and burghesses, inhabitants and natives. The citizens and burghesses are alone admitted to a share in the government: the *inhabitants* are strangers who are allowed to settle in the town with certain privileges; and the *natives* are the sons of these inhabitants, who possess certain additional advantages. The two last classes form a large majority of the people.

The liberal policy of this government, in receiving strangers and conferring the burghership, is the more remarkable as it

is contrary to the spirit of most of the other states of Switzerland. It is here, indeed, more necessary; the territory of this republic being so exceedingly small, that its very existence depends upon the number and industry of the people: for, exclusive of the inhabitants of the town, there are scarcely sixteen thousand souls in the whole district of the Genevois.

To a man of letters, Geneva is particularly interesting; as every branch of science is here cultivated in the most advantageous manner: learning is divested of pedantry, and philosophy united with a knowledge of the world. The pleasures of society are here mixed with the pursuits of literature; and elegance and urbanity give a zest to the profoundest disquisitions. Nor are letters confined in this city merely to those who engage in them as a profession, or to those whose fortune and leisure enable them to follow where genius leads, and enter into a studious life by voluntary choice; even the lower class of people are exceedingly well informed; and there is no city in Europe where learning is so universally diffused among the inhabitants. I have had great satisfaction

faction in conversing with several of the shop-keepers upon topics both of literature and politics, and was astonished to find, in this class of men, so uncommon a share of knowledge. But the wonder ceases, when we are told, that they have all of them received an excellent education at the public academy, where the children of the inhabitants are taught, under the inspection of the magistrates, and at the expence of government.

There is one circumstance in this seminary, which particularly contributes to excite the industry and emulation of the students: prizes are annually distributed to those, who have distinguished themselves in each class. These rewards consist of small medals, and they are conferred with such solemnity as cannot fail of producing great effect. A yearly meeting is held at the cathedral, of all the magistrates, professors, and principal inhabitants of the town; when the first syndic himself distributes, in the most public manner, the several honorary retributions to those who have deserved them. I met this morning one of the scholars, and, seeing his medal, asked him what it meant? "Je la



"porte," replied the little man, scarce eight years old, "parce que j'ai fait mon devoir." I wanted no stronger proof to convince me of the beneficial influence upon young minds, of these encouraging and judicious distinctions, than appeared from the sprightly specimen before me.

The inhabitants enjoy the advantage also of having free access to the public library; and by this privilege, they not only retain but improve that general tincture of learning which they imbibe in their early youth: when I visited this library, it happened to be crowded with students, who were returning the books they had borrowed, and demanding others. As I passed only an hour in this room, I am ill qualified to give you a just idea of its contents: I requested, however, the librarian to point out to me what was most worthy of particular notice. Accordingly, among other books and manuscripts, he shewed me several folio volumes containing letters and other writings of Calvin, which have never been published.

Although Zuingle, *Æcolampadius*, and Haller, had reformed the greatest part of Switzerland, some years before Calvin made his

his appearance at Geneva; yet the latter, as Voltaire justly observes, has given his name to the sectaries of the reformed religion, in the same manner as the new continent took its appellation from Americus Vespufius, although the original discovery was made by Columbus. Neither was Calvin, indeed, the first reformer even of Geneva; but, as he gave additional strength and solidity to the new establishment, and laid the foundation of that ecclesiastical form of government, which has ever since been invariably observed; he totally eclipsed the fame of his friend William Farel, who scattered the first seeds of reformation, which the other brought to maturity. In truth, so great was the ascendancy which this extraordinary man, although a stranger in Geneva, acquired over the citizens, that he possessed no inconsiderable influence even in civil matters; and bore a large share in settling the political constitution of the republic. But his care and attention was not wholly confined to ecclesiastical and political concerns; he promoted, to the utmost of his power, the cultivation of the liberal arts and sciences, and the study of elegant literature.

terature. To this end, as well as to encourage theological erudition, he prevailed upon the government of Geneva to establish a public academy. In this new seminary, himself, together with his colleagues eminent for their superior knowledge, read lectures, with such uncommon reputation and success, that the youth from all quarters flocked to receive the benefit of them; and it has sent forth from its bosom, men of the greatest distinction for their learning and abilities.

There is such a striking splendor in the brighter parts of this disinterested and celebrated reformer's character, as to render one, at the first glance, almost insensible of those dark spots which have so justly sullied its glory. But when one reflects a moment on the asperity, the arrogance, the presumptuous obstinacy of his temper and conduct, and, above all, on his cruel persecution of his former friend, the unhappy Servetus; one laments, with abhorrence, the mortifying instance this famous man exhibited, that the noblest qualities sometimes mix with the basest, in the composition of human nature. With regard, however, to his intolerant principles, it must be

be acknowledged, that the same unchristian spirit prevailed also among some others of the most celebrated reformers; who seemed to think, by a strange and unaccountable blindness, not only to the genius, but to the clearest precepts of the gospel, that persecution for conscience sake was unchristian in every ecclesiastical establishment, except their own. This absurd and dangerous opinion, gave great advantage to their adversaries of the papal hierarchy: for, it is obvious to the meanest understanding, that, if persecution is justifiable in any particular church, it must be so universally.

The republic of Geneva is, however, at present, the most tolerating of all the reformed states of Switzerland; being the only government in this country, which permits the Lutheran religion to be publicly exercised. In this respect the clergy, no less wisely, than suitably to the spirit as well as the letter, of the Christian revelation, have renounced the principles of their great patriarch, Calvin; for, although they still hold that able reformer in high veneration; yet they know how to distinguish his virtues from his defects, and to admire  
the

the one without being blindly partial to the other.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R XXXVII.

October 23.

**I** Write to you a third time from Geneva : desirous of gaining as much information concerning its history, and the nature of its government, as possible ; I visited this town again in my return from Avignon \* into Swisserland. I will now, therefore, endeavour to throw together, from my notes relating to the subject, all that appears worth communicating to you ; premising at the same time, that I find them such an indigested mass, as to have reason to fear I shall not be able to reduce them into so clear an order, as not to stand much in need of your candour when you peruse the following observations.

The town of Geneva and its territory, were formerly united to the German empire, under the successors of Charlemagne : but as the power of the emperors, feeble

\* See the beginning of the former letter.  
even

over in Germany, was still weaker in the frontier provinces ; the bishops of Geneva, like several other great vassals of the empire, gradually acquired very considerable authority over the city and its domains ; which the emperors had no other means of counterbalancing, than by encreasing the liberties of the people. During these times of confusion, constant disputes subsisted between the bishops and the counts of the Genevois ; for, the latter, although at their first institution merely officers of the emperor, and considered as vassals of the bishops ; yet they claimed and asserted a right to the exclusive administration of justice. The citizens took advantage of these quarrels ; and, by siding occasionally with each party, obtained an extension of their privileges from both.

But the house of Savoy having purchased the county of the Genevois, and succeeded to all the prerogatives of the counts, with additional power ; the bishops and the people firmly united together, in order to oppose the encroachments of the former, which were no less prejudicial to the authority of the one, than to the liberties of the others. During this period, the respective

respective pretensions of the counts, the bishops, and the citizens, were so various, as to form a government equally singular and complicated. This harmony, however, between the bishops and citizens, was at length broken by the artful management of the counts of Savoy, who had the address to procure the episcopal see for their brothers, and even for their illegitimate children. By these methods, their power in the city became so enlarged, that, towards the commencement of the sixteenth century, Charles III, duke of Savoy, (although the form of the government was entirely republican) obtained an almost absolute authority over the citizens : and he exercised it in the most unjust and arbitrary manner. Hence arose perpetual struggles between the duke and the citizens ; the latter continually opposing, either by open violence, or secret measures, his tyrannical usurpation : thus two parties were formed ; the zealots for liberty were called *eidgenassen*, or confederates ; while the partisans of the duke were branded with the appellation of *mammelucs*, or slaves.

The treaty of alliance which the town entered

entered into with Berne and Fribourg, in 1526, may be considered as the true era of its liberty and independence ; for, not long after, the duke was despoiled of his authority, the bishop driven from the city, a republican form of government firmly established, and the reformation introduced. From this time, Charles and his successors waged incessant war against the town : but his hostilities were rendered ineffectual, by the intrepid bravery of the citizens, and the assistance of the canton of Berne.

In 1584 Geneva entered into a treaty of perpetual alliance with Zurich and Berne, (Fribourg having renounced their alliance when the town embraced the reformation) by which treaty, it is allied with the Swiss cantons.

The last attempt of the house of Savoy against Geneva, was in 1602, when Charles Emanuel treacherously attacked the town during a profound peace. Two hundred of his soldiers scaled the walls in the night, when the inhabitants were reposed in unsuspecting security ; but being timely discovered, they were repulsed by the desperate valour of a few citizens, who gloriously



ly sacrificed their lives in defence of the liberties of their country. In memory of this event, an inscription is fixed upon the town-house; and some of the scaling-ladders, which the enemy made use of to enter the town, are preserved in the arsenal. This perfidy occasioned a war, which was terminated the year following by a solemn treaty; since which, uninterrupted peace has been maintained between the house of Savoy and Geneva: but it was not till 1754, that the king of Sardinia acknowledged, by a formal act, the independence of this republic.

No sooner was peace concluded with the house of Savoy, than the flames of internal discord, so apt to kindle in popular governments, and which had been smothered by their common danger from a foreign enemy, began to appear. Accordingly, during the greatest part of the last century, to the present period, the history of Geneva contains little more than a narrative of contentions between the aristocratical and the popular party. These mutual struggles have occasionally been exerted with so much violence and animosity, as to have threatened, for a moment, a total revolution

volution in the state ; but happily, however, they have always been compromised without producing any fatal effects.

About the beginning of the present century, the power of the council of two hundred was become almost absolute. In order to restrain their authority, the popular party, in 1707, procured a law, by which it was enacted, that every five years a general council of all the citizens and burghers should be holden, to deliberate upon the affairs of the republic. Agreeably to this law, a general assembly was convened in 1712 ; and the very first act exerted by the people in this their collective capacity, was the total abolition of the above-mentioned ordinance. An event of so singular a nature, can hardly be accounted for upon the general principle of popular fickleness and inconsistency : accordingly Rousseau, in his *Lettres écrites de la Montagne*, imputes it to the artifices of the magistrates ; and to the equivocal terms marked upon the billets then in use. For, the question proposed to the people being, “ Whether the opinion of the councils, “ far abolishing the periodical general assemblies, should pass into a law.” the words

words employed on the billets delivered for that purpose, were, *approbation*, *rejection*; so that whichever side was taken, it came to the same point. If the billet of *approbation* were chosen; the opinion of the councils which rejected the periodical assembly, was approved; if that of *rejection*; then the periodical assembly was rejected of course. Accordingly, several of the citizens afterwards complained that they had been deceived, as they never meant to reject the general assembly, but only the opinion of the councils \*.

In consequence of this extraordinary repeal, the power of the aristocracy continued encreasing till within these few years; when the citizens, by a singular conjunction of favourable circumstances, joined to an uncommon spirit of union and perseverance, have procured several changes to be made in the constitution of Geneva; by which the authority of the magistrates has been limited, and the privileges of the people have been enlarged. Happy! if they know where to stop; lest, continuing to extend the bounds of their own prerogatives, they shake the foundations of civil

\* Miscellaneous Works of Rousseau, Vol. iv. p. 279.

government; by too much restraining the power of the magistrates.

The present constitution of Geneva, may be considered as a mean between that of the other aristocratical and popular cantons of Switzerland : more democratical than any of the former, inasmuch as the sovereign and legislative authority entirely resides in the general assembly of the citizens and burghers ; and more aristocratical than the latter, because the powers vested in the great and little councils are very considerable.

The members of the senate, or little council of twenty-five, enjoy, in their corporate capacity, several prerogatives almost as great as those which are possessed by that of the most aristocratical states. They nominate half the members of the great council ; the principal magistrates are taken from their body ; they convoke the great council and the general assembly of the citizens and burghers ; they previously deliberate upon every question which is to be brought into the great council, and from thence into the general assembly : in other words, in them is lodged the power of proposing ; consequently, as every act must originate from them, no law can pass with-

out their approbation. In this senate is vested also the chief executive power, the administration of the finances; and, to a certain degree, jurisdiction in civil and criminal causes. They nominate, likewise, to most of the smaller posts of government; and enjoy the sole privilege of conferring burghership. They compose, moreover, in conjunction with thirty-five members of their own choosing, the secret council; which never assembles but by their con- voking, and only upon extraordinary oc- casions.

These considerable prerogatives, how- ever, are counterbalanced as well by the privileges of the great council, as by the franchises of the general assembly. The prerogatives of the former consist in choos- ing the members of the senate from their own body; in receiving appeals, in all causes above a certain value; in pardon- ing criminals; in disposing of the most im- portant charges of government, those ex- cepted which are conferred by the general assembly; and in approving or reject- ing whatever is proposed by the senate to be laid before the people.

The sovereign council, or general assem- bly

bly of the people, is composed of the citizens and burghers of the town : their number, in general, amounts to about 1,500, but it is seldom that more than 1,200 convene ; the remainder being either settled in foreign countries, or are usually absent. I ought to have explained to you sooner, the distinction between *citizens* and *burghers* : the latter, are either the sons of citizens or burghers \*, born out of Geneva, or have obtained the burghership by purchase ; the former, are the sons of citizens or burghers, born within the town of Geneva. The burghers may be chosen into the council of two hundred, but the citizens can alone enter into the senate, and possess the charges appropriated to that body.

The general assembly meets twice a year ; chooses the principal magistrates ; assents to, or rejects, the laws and regulations proposed by the councils ; imposes taxes ; contracts alliances ; declares war or peace ;

\* The children of those who are employed in foreign countries, in the service of the state, although born out of Geneva, are entitled to all the privileges of citizens.

and nominates one half of the members of the great council. All questions that come before them, are decided by the majority of voices ; and each member delivers his vote without having the liberty of debating. The restriction is certainly reasonable ; for, in a popular assembly, like this of Geneva, composed of citizens, the meanest of whom is well versed in the constitution of the commonwealth, and where the people in general have a strong propensity to enter into political discussions ; if every voter were permitted to support and enforce his opinion by argument, there would be no end of debate, and the whole time would be consumed in petulant declamation.

But the principal check to the power of the little council, arises from the method of electing the syndics, and from the right of *representation*. With respect to the former, the four syndics, or chiefs of the republic, are chosen annually out of the little council, by the general assembly ; and there must be an interval of three years before the same members can be again elected. The usual mode of election is as follows :  
—The little council nominate eight of their  
members

members for candidates, who must be approved by the great council, and out of these eight, the general assembly choose the four syndics. They have it in their power, however, not only to reject these eight proposed candidates, but also all the other members of the senate successively: and in that case, four members are taken from the great council, and proposed to the general assembly. If these are appointed syndics, they immediately become members of the senate; and an equal number of that body are at the same time degraded, and retire into the great council: but no instance has yet occurred of the general assembly having exerted this power of expelling four members from the senate\*.

With respect to the other restraint I mentioned upon the power of the little council, viz. the right of *representation*: every citizen or burgher, either singly or in a body, has the privilege of applying to the senate in order to procure some new regulation, or of remonstrating against any

\* Since the above was written, I have been informed, that the citizens and burghers expelled four members from the senate, at the election of magistrates for the year 1777.



act of the magistracy. These representations have proved one of the principal means, perhaps, of securing the liberties of the people from the respective encroachments of the two councils; as they have frequently prevented the magistrates from stretching their authority to the same arbitrary extent that has been practised in some of the other commonwealths of Switzerland. The magistrates are obliged to give an explicit answer to these representations; for, if the first is not considered as satisfactory, a second remonstrance is presented. According to the nature and importance of the complaint, the representation is made by a greater or less number of citizens; and it has sometimes happened that each remonstrance has been accompanied by several hundred, in different bodies.

The salaries of the magistrates are so inconsiderable, as not to offer any temptation on the side of pecuniary emolument; a sense of honour, a spirit of ambition, the desire of serving their country, together with that personal credit which is derived from exercising any office in the administration, are the principal motives which

which actuate the candidates to solicit a share in the magistracy. Accordingly, the public posts are generally filled with men of the first abilities, and of the most respectable characters. The revenues of government, at the highest calculation, scarcely amount to 30,000 pounds a year; a sum, however, which, by a well-regulated oeconomy, is more than sufficient to defray the current expences: so that this republic is enabled to provide for the security of its subjects, from an income which some individuals, both in England and France, squander in vain pomp and vicious dissipation.

It is very remarkable that, in a republic so free as this of Geneva, and where the true principles of liberty are so well and so generally understood, there should be no precise code of penal laws: for, although the form of the prosecution is settled with great precision, yet the trial of the criminal is private, and the punishment left to the arbitrary decision of the magistrate. Nor are the franchises of the people ascertained with that accuracy one might well have expected. Indeed, under Ademar Fabri, bishop of Geneva in the fourteenth century,

century, a certain number of political regulations, both civil and criminal, together with several particular customs and franchises, were drawn up in form; and the bishop took an oath to observe them. These statutes, if they may be so called, were also confirmed by Amadeus VIII, duke of Savoy. In all cases of controversy, the people appeal to this code; but it is not only compiled in a very inaccurate and confused manner, but the magistrates refuse to be governed by it, because it was published before the independence of the republic was confirmed. With respect to the several laws which have since been enacted in the general assembly; some few of them indeed are printed, and in the hands of the public, but the rest remain in the archives of the senate: for, there being no particular secretary belonging to the general assembly; all the laws which they pass are taken down by the secretary to the senate; so that the latter are the sole depositaries of those edicts which ought to be laid open to the inspection of the whole community. The people have repeatedly demanded a precise code of municipal and penal laws, so express and determinate,

terminate; that nothing may be left to the arbitrary decision of the magistrate; but the senate has always found means of evading this very reasonable and just requisition.

Their code of civil law is the most perfect part of this constitution: all matters concerning commerce are well regulated by it; and private property securely guarded. It is unnecessary to trouble you with a particular detail of the sumptuary laws; they are much the same as those in most of the other states of Switzerland, where restrictions of that kind are enforced. But there is one law, relating to bankrupts, too singularly severe not to be mentioned. If a member of either council becomes a bankrupt, he is immediately degraded; and from that moment is rendered incapable of holding any post under government, until he shall have discharged all the just demands of his creditors: even his children are subjected to the same disgrace; and no citizen can exercise any public employment whatsoever, while the debts of his father remain unpaid.

In this city, as in all the other principal towns of Switzerland, a public granary is established,

established. Magazines of this kind are useful in all states, but are more particularly necessary in so populous a place as Geneva; which, if the neighbouring powers were to prohibit the exportation of corn into the territory of the republic, might be exposed to all the horrors of a general famine. The benefit of this institution has been frequently experienced in times of scarcity: and all authors who have published observations upon the government of Geneva, have agreed in mentioning it with the praises it deserves. But they have overlooked one great defect in its regulation, and which is not imputable to the management of those public granaries which are established in Berne and Zurich. The *chamber of corn*, as it is here called, is a committee from the great council of two hundred, empowered to supply the granary with that commodity, at the expense of government. This corn is dried by means of machines well contrived for that purpose; retailed out to the inn-keepers and bakers; a considerable profit accrues to government; and there is always, in case of necessity, a sufficient quantity in reserve to support the inhabitants during

a year and an half. Thus far, all is right: but then the burden of this institution falls upon the poor. For, as the directors buy the corn at the cheapest rate; retail that part of it which has been kept the longest; and vend it at an higher price than it is sold in the neighbouring territories; the bakers must consequently sell their bread dearer, and not of so good a quality, as that which may be purchased on the frontiers of Savoy. But the importation of bread is strictly prohibited: those families, therefore, who can afford it, lay in a provision of corn for their own use; while the poorer sort suffer, by being obliged to purchase, at an advanced price, their daily provision from the bakers. Perhaps, however, the government is not sufficiently rich to put their granary upon the same footing with those of Berne and Zurich, by sacrificing the profit arising from the chamber of corn.

The town is strongly fortified on the side of Savoy; and a garrison of about nine hundred men constantly maintained: but these fortifications, and this garrison, are only sufficient to guard them from any sudden attack; they could not defend them  
long

long against a regular siege. The great security of the republic consists in its alliance with the Swiss cantons, by means of Zurich and Berne : and, as it is the interest both of the king of France and the king of Sardinia to keep well with the Swiss, and to preserve the independence of Geneva ; it derives its greatest security from what, in some cases, would be its greatest danger ; namely, that its territory borders upon the dominions of such powerful neighbours.

This republic is the only commonwealth in Switzerland, that has no regular companies in any foreign service ; wisely prohibiting the enlisting of mercenaries in every part of its territory.

I am, &c,

## L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Bienne, October 26.

**T**HE small territory of Bienne, containing scarcely six thousand inhabitants, lies between the lake, and a chain of the Jura mountains : it is surrounded by the cantons of Berne and Soleure, the bishoprick

bishoprick of Basil, and the principality of Neuchatel. The town is situated at the foot of the chain above-mentioned, and at a little distance from the lake; which is here about nine miles in length, and four in breadth; the borders are pleasing and picturesque; and the town of Nidau forms a very beautiful object upon its eastern side. In the midst of the lake is an island belonging to the canton of Berne, in which the persecuted Rousseau resided some months, after he had renounced all the rights of a citizen of Geneva, and until the government of Berne compelled him to quit their territory. I cannot forbear observing, upon this occasion, that the fate of this very ingenious philosopher seems to have been no less singular than his doctrine: for, after having been driven out of two republics, he found an asylum in the capital of an absolute government, and, what is more extraordinary, of that very government too, which is supposed to have instigated the magistrates of Geneva to exert an act of arbitrary power against him, which in its consequence produced a diminution of their own authority.

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The bishop of Basil is the sovereign of this little state: his power formerly was considerable, but at present is exceedingly limited. Indeed the constitution of Bienne is of so very peculiar a nature, that I know not well by what name to distinguish it: it cannot properly be called either a limited monarchy, or an independent republic; it seems rather to be a certain mixed government, partaking somewhat of both.

The bishop of Basil, or the prince of Porentru, as he is called by the protestant cantons, receives, upon his promotion to the bishoprick, the homage of the citizens and militia of this town, with all the apparent ceremonials of the most absolute submission; but at the same time, he confirms, in the strongest manner, all their privileges and franchises. He is represented by a mayor of his own appointing, whose power and office consist in convoking, and presiding in, the little council, as the chief court of justice; in collecting the suffrages, and declaring the sentence, but without giving any vote himself. And, although justice is carried on, and executed, in the name of the prince, yet neither himself, nor the mayor, has the prerogative

rogative of pardoning criminals, or of mitigating the sentence. All causes, civil as well as criminal, are brought before this council in the first instance; and in the more important ones, an appeal lies to the sovereign council: in both cases, each party chooses a member of the council to act as his advocate; which office the member is obliged to discharge without fee or recompence. To this species of lawyers, Martial's severe imputation, that *iras & verba locant*, is by no means applicable: it must be owned, however, that they are of a kind extremely uncommon.

The sovereign's revenue amounts only to about £. 300 a year: but, mean as his civil list is, it is still more considerable than his authority; for he does not possess the least share of the administration. The regency of the town is jointly vested in the great and little councils; the former, in which the legislative power resides, consists of forty members; and the latter, in which the executive is lodged, is composed of twenty-four: the members of each must be married men. Both these councils elect their respective members; and so far the constitution is entirely aristocratical. The burgomaster

burgomaster is chief of the regency; is chosen by the two councils; and presides at their meetings, whenever they are assembled together in their joint capacity. He continues in his office during life; in which, however, he must be confirmed annually by the two councils: as are also the several magistrates in their respective posts. The salaries annexed to these offices are exceedingly moderate: and, indeed, the general expences of the government are so very small, that, in proportion to them, its revenues may well be considered as abundantly ample.

It appears, therefore, that this protestant republic, notwithstanding the sovereignty of its catholic bishop, enjoys in the fullest extent the power of imposing taxes, contracting alliances, declaring war and peace; and, in short, of exercising every other act of absolute and independent legislation. This singular constitution is guaranteed by Berne, Fribourg, and Soleure, with whom the town is closely allied; in consequence of which, it becomes a member of the Helvetic confederacy. And, what is somewhat remarkable, this alliance between those cantons and the town of Bienne, is

of a superior nature to that of the same cantons with the bishop of Basil: for, the town enjoys the right of sending deputies to every general diet, ordinary and extraordinary; whereas the bishop is not allowed the same privilege.

The language of the country, is a kind of provincial German; but, as the territory borders upon the principality of Neuchâtel, the inhabitants speak also a kind of corrupted French. They are a very active and industrious people: several manufactures are established in the town, which, considering its size, carries on a large trade.

I have often had occasion to observe to you, that the common people of Switzerland are far more intelligent than the same rank of men in any other country. Accordingly, I invited my landlord last night to sup with me; and I found him by no means disposed to be a silent guest. He gave me a long account of the ceremony that was lately performed here, when the citizens did homage to their new bishop. I was pleased to hear him expatiate, with all the enthusiasm of national pride, upon the beauty and gran-

deur of the scene; the magnificence of the procession; the number of spectators, as well strangers as natives, who were assembled; together with the entertainments and the balls that were given upon that occasion. By the lofty terms in which he spoke of this procession, you would have thought, at least, that he had been describing the coronation of the emperor of Germany, or the king of France: and, in truth, to an inhabitant of Bienné, whose government is administered without the least degree of external pomp, and where luxury has not yet made any progress; the ceremony must necessarily have appeared a very striking spectacle. My host's narrative recalled to my remembrance the accounts of those ancient feudal sovereignties, when the great vassals of the crown did homage to their liege lord; and, while in *terms* they promised him unlimited obedience, maintained, in *fact*, every essential of independence.

I have just been amusing myself in some pleasant walks, that lie by the side of the lake, which is here prettily skirted with country houses. In my way I passed over a plain between the town and the lake,

which

which the sovereign council, by a kind of agrarian law that does honour to the legislature, allotted not long ago, in distinct portions, to each burgher, for his own particular use: it is entirely laid out in little neat kitchen-gardens. The general government, indeed, of this miniature state, is well administered. It has lately adopted the liberal policy of conferring the burghership at an easy rate: a wise regulation, which cannot fail of encreasing the population of the town, and extending its commerce.

I know your sentiments much too well, my dear sir, to apologize for calling your attention in the present instance, as, in some others, to these diminutive commonwealths. The various modifications of government into which civil society is divided, is a speculation that will always afford matter both of entertainment and reflection, to a philosophic mind: and I am persuaded, that you consider the meanest spot of this globe consecrated by liberty, to be an object worthy, not only of your curiosity, but your veneration.

I am, &c.

## L E T T E R . XXXIX.

Soleure, October 28

**T**HE road from Bienne to Soleure, lies through a rich and cultivated valley, enclosed within the Jura mountains. The town is pleasantly situated upon the Aar, which here expands its banks, and opens into a broad and fine river, flowing at the foot of some high and steep hills; the circumjacent country is exceedingly pleasing and diversified.

I will not exert the privilege of a traveller, and tell you, what some extravagant antiquarians do not scruple to assert, that Soleure was built by the patriarch, Abraham; but you will have no difficulty, perhaps, in believing what others maintain, that it was one of the twelve towns which were destroyed upon the emigration of the original inhabitants into Gaul. But at what time, and upon what occasion, soever its destruction happened; it appears probable, from a great number of inscriptions, medals, and other antiquities, that have been found in the neighbourhood, that it was re-peopled by a Roman colony; and certainly was a  
Roman

Roman fortification, as its ancient appellation, *Castrum Saledurense*, necessarily implies.

Little more of its history is known, during that period of ignorance and barbarism which succeeded the downfall of the Roman empire, than that it was sacked and destroyed by those northern nations, who over-ran the greatest part of Europe. From the time of its re-establishment, until its admission into the Helvetic confederacy in 1481, its state was similar to that of many other imperial towns, which acquired a gradual accession of territory, and after various struggles finally secured to themselves an absolute independence.

The canton of Soleure is nearly twelve leagues in length, and seven in its greatest breadth; stretching partly through the plain, and partly along the ridges of the Jura. Its population may amount to between forty and fifty thousand souls; of which the capital contains about five thousand; all the inhabitants of the canton are catholics.

The government is aristocratical, upon much the same plan as that of Lucerne,



and of Fribourg: the patrician families are in possession of all the public employments. The sovereign council consists of an hundred and twenty members, in which the senate or council of thirty-five is comprised: the latter is composed of two advoyers, eleven alt-raths, or senior counsellors, and twenty-two jung-raths, or Junior counsellors. Upon the death of one of the alt-raths, the senior of the jung-raths succeeds to his place; and the vacancy occasioned by that removal, is filled up by the eleven alt-raths out of the great council. It is from the alt-raths, that the four principal magistrates are chosen; namely, the two advoyers, the banneret, and the treasurer: and upon the death of one of the advoyers, the banneret succeeds to his place of course, after having gone through the formality of being nominated by the general assembly of the burghers. When a vacancy happens in the great council, it is supplied by the eleven alt-raths, who always choose the new member from the same tribe, or *company* of the citizens to which the last member belonged. The whole body of burghers assemble every year,

year, and confirm the advoyers and the banneret in their respective offices : at the same time the twenty-two jung-raths confirm the eleven alt-raths, who in their turn confirm in the same manner the former. But all these several confirmations are matters of mere formality. No person can be elected into the great council before he has attained the age of twenty, nor into the senate sooner than twenty-four.

Excepting the treasurer, who is elected by the sovereign council ; and the advoyers and banneret, who are chosen by the burghers ; all the other public employments are at the disposal of the senate : which body has jurisdiction likewise in all civil and criminal causes, without appeal. The revenues of this government, and the stipends of the numerous places held under it, are, (the circumstances of these states considered) by no means small : so that the chief families derive from the several posts they possess, very profitable emoluments.

The soil of this canton is exceedingly fertile, and those districts which lie within the Jura, abound in excellent pastures :

but there is a great want of hands for all the purposes of agriculture, and the defect sensibly encreases. Nevertheless, the ground is so particularly favourable to corn, that a third part of the yearly produce may be exported, without the least detriment to the public. The trade both of the town and of the canton is of little value, although they are very commodiously situated for carrying on an extensive commerce.

The French ambassador to the Helvetic body resides in this town, and distributes from hence those annual pensions or subsidies, which the king his master has stipulated by treaty to pay the catholic cantons: they amount to about 30,000 pounds a year. Louis XI. was the first French monarch who employed Swiss troops in his service, and granted subsidies to the states. These have since been considerably augmented by his successors: and the perpetual alliance which Francis I. concluded with the Swiss cantons, soon after the battle of Marignano, is considered as the basis of every subsequent treaty that has been made between the two contracting powers. Several of the successors of that king derived

rived considerable advantages from the Swiss infantry in their service; they aided Henry IV. in establishing himself upon the throne of his ancestors; and assisted both Louis XIII. and his son, in the several wars in which they were engaged. No troops indeed have ever been more justly distinguished for their fidelity, their valour, and the excellence of their discipline.

The last general alliance between France and the whole Helvetic union, concluded by Louis the XIVth in 1663, was to remain in force during the joint lives of that monarch, and his son the dauphin, and for eight years after the death of either of them. Towards the end of his reign, when Louis, on account of his son's death, proposed to renew the alliance in his and his successor's name; the protestant cantons refused their consent: accordingly it was concluded only with the catholic cantons, and the republic of the Vallais.

This alliance differed from the former treaties in some very essential articles, particularly, as it stipulated that, in case the kingdom of France should be invaded, the Swiss republics in question should permit

an additional levy to be raised at his majesty's expence, not exceeding sixteen thousand men; that in case the Helvetic body, or any particular canton, should be attacked by a foreign power, the king engaged to assist them with as many forces as should be thought necessary; and finally, that if any dissensions should arise between the contracting cantons, his majesty should, at the request of the aggrieved party, try all gentle methods of bringing about a reconciliation; but if these should fail, the king agreed, both in his own name, and in that of his successor, to compel the aggressor to abide by the treaties contracted between the cantons and their allies. This last article seemed, in some measure, to authorize the interference of the king of France with the politics of Swisserland; and, in that view, appeared dangerous to many of the Swiss, and inconsistent with that absolute independence, which they had hitherto prized above all other advantages.

The court of France is at present endeavouring to persuade the protestant cantons to accede to the alliance, in order that a general treaty may be renewed: and it

is expected that a diet will soon be holden at Soleure \* for that purpose.

I am, &c.

## LETTER XL.

Bafil, November 1.

**T**HE road from Soleure to this town, lies through the midst of the Jura

\* The alliance in question was actually concluded at Soleure in May 1777, between the king of France on one side, and the thirteen cantons and their allies on the other, to continue in force during fifty years. By this treaty it is agreed, that in case the kingdom of France should be invaded, the cantons and their allies are to furnish an additional levy of six thousand men; and if the Swiss cantons, or any of their allies, should be attacked, the king, if required, engages to send to them, at his own expence, such succours as may be thought necessary.

That article of the treaty concluded with the catholic cantons in 1715, which related to the mediation of the king of France, in case of any disputes arising between the thirteen cantons, is very properly and wisely omitted.

Before this alliance, none of the protestant states of Switzerland ever received any pensions from France: but by the sixteenth article, the protestants of Glaris and Appenzel, and the town of Bienné, have agreed to accept *les argents de paix et d'alliance*, as these subsidies are here called,

mountains,

mountains, along the vale of Balstal, remarkable for its richness and fertility: and though the country in general is exceedingly romantic and rocky, yet in many places it is highly cultivated.

I turned a little out of the direct way to this place, in order to view the ruins of *Augusta Rauricorum*, formerly a large town under the dominion of the Romans; now a small village in the canton of Basil, close to the Rhine. Its ancient remains are very inconsiderable, consisting of a few pillars of marble still standing, and some scattered fragments of others, together with a kind of semicircular range of walls upon a rising ground, the greatest part of which has tumbled down, and is almost entirely overgrown with brushwood. From the present appearance of the last-mentioned ruins, I should hardly have guessed that they once composed part of a theatre, capable of containing above twelve thousand spectators. But the celebrated Schæffer has given, in his *Alsatia Illustrata*, a particular description of this theatre, and its dimensions; as also of the temple, to which the marble columns I mentioned, formerly belonged. Besides these, there are  
likewise

likewise the remains of some small aqueducts, which conveyed water to the town from the distance of above twelve miles; but none of these relics of antiquity have any thing so very remarkable in them, as to merit the trouble of a particular visit.

The peasants, in turning up the ground where these ruins are situated, frequently find medals of the Roman emperors, from Augustus to Constantine; and are become, by repeated experience, able to distinguish, with some degree of precision, those that are rare from the more common ones. I purchased of a labourer two medals which he had just found; a Trajan and an Albinus: and though the former was by far the most perfect, yet he made me pay three times as much for the latter, because he had never seen it, he said, before.

I arrived here, the day before yesterday, and, as I had good reason to be assured, about twelve at noon; but was much surprised to find, that all the clocks in the town agreed to make me suppose I was mistaken, and actually struck one: the fact is, that every one of them go an hour faster than those of the rest of Europe. Different reasons have been assigned for this singularity:



singularity: some assert, that it was first practised during the council of Basil, in order to assemble the cardinals and bishops the earlier, who, being a very lazy and indolent set of mortals, always came too late. Others tell you, that a conspiracy being formed to enter the town at midnight, and to assassinate the magistrates; one of the burgomasters, who had notice of the design, put the town clock an hour forward; by which means the conspirators, imagining they had missed the appointed time, retired; and that the clocks are still kept in the same advanced state, as a perpetual memorial of this happy deliverance. But there is a third reason given for this strange custom, which seems by far the most probable. It is well known that the choirs of cathedrals and churches are constructed towards the east: that of Basil declines somewhat from this direction; and the sun-dial, which is placed upon the outside of the choir, and by which the town clock is always regulated, partakes of this declination; a circumstance which, according to the celebrated Bernoulli, occasions a variation from the true time of above five and forty minutes.

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But whatever may have been the original of this whimsical custom; the inhabitants of Basil are so strongly attached to it, that as often as it has been proposed in the sovereign council to have their clocks properly regulated, the motion has constantly been rejected. In reality, the people would think their liberties invaded, if their clocks were to go like the rest of the world's. A few years since, it was secretly agreed upon by some of the leading men of the town, to have the sun-dial turned half a minute a day, until the shadow should imperceptibly point to the true hour. This expedient was accordingly put in practice, and the town clock had already lost near three quarters of an hour, when an accident discovered the plot; and the magistrates were compelled to place the sun-dial in the same position it stood before, and to have the town clock regulated by it as usual. Indeed, long-established customs, however indifferent or ridiculous, are apt to lay so strong a hold upon vulgar minds, as to become sometimes dangerous, and always difficult, to be abolished; especially among a people, like those of this country, who are averse to any change,

even

even in the minutest articles. I need not remind you, how long it was before we could be persuaded in England, to reckon our years according to the general mode of computation received by the rest of Europe.

Basil is beautifully situated upon the banks of the Rhine, near the point where that river (which here becomes very broad, deep, and rapid) after flowing for some way from east to west, turns suddenly to the north. It consists of two towns joined together by an handsome bridge; the largest of which towns lies on the side of Switzerland, and the smallest on the German side of the river. It stands very advantageously for commerce; and it is an advantage which the inhabitants have by no means neglected: for, they have established a great variety of manufactures of all sorts; and a very extensive and lucrative trade is carried on by the principal merchants of the place.

The cathedral is an elegant gothic building, but strangely disfigured by a daubing of rose-coloured paint spread over the whole edifice. In this cathedral are deposited, under a marble tomb, the venerable remains  
of

of the great Erasmus. That distinguished writer joined to superior learning, and a peculiar elegance of style, the keenest wit, which he pointed, not only against the vices and ignorance of the monks, but the general corruptions and disorders of the church of Rome. He was indeed the forerunner of Luther, in his first attacks upon the catholics, respecting the sale of indulgences: but afterwards, when the controversy appeared to be taking a more serious turn, and an open breach with the church of Rome seemed inevitable; he condemned the proceedings of that bold reformer. He considered them, indeed, as altogether unwarrantable; and, although he had himself censured and exposed the corruptions that infected the catholic religion, yet he zealously inculcated submissive obedience to the decrees of what he called the "universal church." Agreeably to these sentiments, he advised the protestants to endeavour at obtaining, by mild and patient measures, what they might indiscreetly lose by a warmer and more violent opposition.

Such temperate counsels were ill suited to the daring and impetuous spirit of Lu-

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ther. Accordingly, while Erasmus was acting the part of a mediator, and endeavouring to moderate and allay the flame on each side, he drew upon himself the displeasure of both parties : by the one, he was reproached for having gone too far ; and by the other for not having gone much farther. In allusion to this trimming conduct, one of his adversaries applied to him, not unaptly, that line in Virgil,

“ Terras inter cælumque volabat.”

The impartial truth seems to be, that he was by no means disposed to become a martyr in the cause : and the natural timidity of his temper, together with a too great deference to persons of superior rank and power ; and perhaps also the fear of losing his pensions ; probably entered into the prevailing motives that induced him to take a decided part against the reformers, and condemn their separation from the church of Rome as an apostasy.

But it would be uncandid to impute his conduct wholly to selfish considerations ; something may fairly be ascribed to the powerful impressions of early prejudices ; and something to that rooted love of peace  
and

and studious tranquillity which seems to have been the governing principle of most of his actions. But, whatever imperfections may be discovered in some particular parts of his character, his memory must ever be revered by every friend of genius, learning, and moderation. Liveliness of imagination, depth and variety of erudition, together with great sagacity of judgment, were in him eminently united. He infused a spirit of elegance even into theological controversies ; and contributed to disencumber literature of that scholastic jargon with which it was disgraced : in a word, he wanted nothing but a little more courage, to have been confessedly one of the first characters of the age in which he flourished. Erasmus reflected much honour upon this town, by choosing it as the favourite place of his residence, and publishing from hence the greatest part of his valuable works. In the public library are preserved, with great veneration, several of his letters, and his last testament, written with his own hand ; as also his hanger and his seal.

The library contains some very valuable manuscripts ; the most curious of which

are those relating to the council of Basil, together with several volumes of letters written to and from the first reformers, and from several men of letters of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The collection of books, though not very considerable, is chiefly remarkable for many rare and valuable editions ; particularly of those which were printed in the fifteenth century.

In a suite of rooms belonging to this library, is a cabinet of natural curiosities ; some antient medals and gems ; a few antiquities found at Augst ; a large collection of prints ; and some fine drawings and paintings, consisting chiefly of originals by Holbein, who was a native of this town. These pictures are, most of them, in the highest preservation ; and what renders them the more valuable is, that the connoisseur can here trace all the different manners of Holbein, and compare the productions of his youth with those of his more mature age. The most valuable of these pieces is, the passion of our Saviour, in eight compartments : a performance in which this admirable artist has carried to the highest perfection, that singular brilliancy  
of

of colouring so peculiar to all his compositions. I was much struck with a profile of his friend and patron Erasmus, writing his commentary upon St. Matthew : there is a spirit and animation in the countenance, wonderfully expressive of the great author's sagacious and penetrating talents.

The dance of death, in the church-yard of the predicants of the suburbs of St. John, is always shewn to strangers as being of Holbein's pencil. It is painted in oil-colours upon a wall, and guarded by an iron railing : but, as it has several times been retouched, no traces are discoverable of that great master's hand. In fact, Mr. Horace Walpole, and other unquestionable judges, have shewn, beyond a doubt, that it was painted not only before Holbein was born, and as a memorial of the plague which raged at Basil during the sitting of the celebrated council, appointed by Pope Eugenius IV. in 1431 ; but that he was not employed even in retouching it. It is probable, however, that, from this antient performance, he took the first hint towards composing his famous drawings of the dance of death. In treating this subject, he has discovered such wonderful richness of imagination,



nation, and shewn so much judgment in the disposition of the figures, and so much spirit in the execution of them, that Rubens studied them with particular attention, and took drawings from them himself \*.

There are prints taken of some of these drawings by Hollar, which are very scarce. Mr. de Mechel, a celebrated artist of this place, is now employed in engraving them after the original designs †; a work which cannot

\* The originals were purchased by Mr. Fleichman of Strasbourg, at the sale of the famous collection of Crozat, at Paris; of which Mariette has given a catalogue. They are now in the possession of prince Gallicin, minister from the empress of Russia to the court of Vienna. They consist of forty-four small drawings: the outlines are sketched with a pen, and they are slightly shaded with Indian ink. I had frequent opportunities of seeing them, during my continuance at Vienna; and particularly admired the amazing variety of attitudes and characters in which death is represented.

† They have been published since this letter was written. Mr. de Mechel has added four which are not in the prince's collection, and which that artist has taken from the engravings of Hollar. But he has omitted several delightful groupes of bacchanalian children (as having no connection with the subject) which are equal in nature and in beauty to any thing

I ever

cannot fail of being highly acceptable to the admirers of the fine arts. He has nearly finished also a set of prints from the fine paintings of the Dusseldorf gallery, and likewise the engravings of the famous Hedlinger's medals. This able engraver has himself a small but well-chosen collection of paintings: and his magazine of prints (in which article he carries on a very considerable trade) is perhaps the largest and most complete in Europe. I am acquainted with no person to whom the curious traveller can address himself with greater advantage than to Mr. de Mechel, nor from whom he can receive more useful information. To a particular knowledge of the physical beauties of Swisserland, he joins a thorough acquaintance with the different governments, customs, and manners of the several cantons. As he is intimately connected with the principal men of learning

I ever saw of Rubens. Mr. de Mechel ingeniously conjectures, from the dresses and characters of several of the figures in the dance of death, that the author sketched them while he was in England. They were, probably, in the Arundelian collection when Hollar copied them.

in this country, his letters of recommendation are the most desirable, and the most beneficial, that can be procured: and he has as much satisfaction in conferring, as can be received by accepting, his good offices. He is indeed possessed of a great fund of good-humour, an amiable frankness of disposition, and a certain originality of manner, which, together with his other valuable qualities, recommend him as a no less pleasing than useful acquaintance.

I am, &c.

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#### LETTER XLI.

**T**HE town of Basil was formerly under the dominion of its bishops, but their power was gradually diminished, till at length, and even before the reformation, it was almost reduced to nothing. In 1501, the canton joined the Helvetic confederacy, and had the ninth rank assigned to it. From that period the bishops quitted the town; established their residence at Porrentru; and soon intirely lost what little authority and inconsiderable prerogatives remained

remained to them. Upon the introduction of the reformation, the constitution was in some measure changed; the power of the aristocracy was much limited, and the government took a more republican form than before.

It would seem in theory scarce possible to divide the aristocratical and democratical commonwealths into so many different species as are to be found in Switzerland: for, in this country, every republic has its peculiar modification, which distinguishes it from all others of the same kind; and there is none more singular than that of Basl. To view the general outlines only of the constitution, it has the appearance of being an absolute aristocracy\*; but, upon considering it in detail, it will be found to

\* An aristocracy (strictly speaking) means that form of government, which places the supreme power in the nobles, exclusively of the people; but here I mean by it, the confining of the sovereign authority to a certain limited number of persons, without considering whether they are patricians or plebeians, nobles or commons: for, at Basl every citizen who is noble, and who chuses to retain his title of nobility, is excluded from all possibility of being elected a member of the sovereign council.

incline towards a democracy. The supreme legislative power resides in the great and little councils, consisting of about three hundred members: and the authority of these two councils combined, is without controul. They enact laws, make war and peace, contract alliances, and impose taxes: they elect the several magistrates, appoint their own members, nominate to all employments, and confer the right of burghership. The general administration of government is committed by the sovereign council to the senate, or little council; that is, to a part of its own body. This senate is composed of sixty members, together with the four chiefs of the republic, two burgomasters, and two tribunes: these are divided into two bodies, which act by rotation. The acting division continues in office one year: they decide finally in all criminal causes; superintend the police; and exercise several other powers subordinate to the sovereign council. The collective body of citizens assembles only once a year, when the magistrates publicly take an oath to maintain the laws, and preserve the liberties and immunities of the people, inviolate. The reciprocal oath of

allegiance to the magistrates, is administered to the citizens in their respective tribes.

But, notwithstanding the great and boundless prerogatives of the sovereign council; yet the meanest citizen is legally capable of being admitted a member; and, by the singular method of election, may possibly be chosen. For, the members of the two councils are drawn from all the several ranks of citizens, one class only excepted, *viz.* the members of the university. These citizens are divided into eighteen tribes; fifteen of which belong to the larger town; and three to the smaller: each of the first-mentioned fifteen tribes, returns four members to the senate; and each of the whole eighteen, sends twelve to the great council. Formerly these elections were determined by a plurality of voices: but, as by this means the richest candidate was always certain of being chosen; a *ternaire*, as it is called, was established; that is, three candidates were put in nomination, and it was decided by lot which of the three should succeed to the vacant post.

Although this mode of election put a stop, in some measure, to corruption; yet it

it was not sufficient to counteract entirely the influence of the wealthy : and, as the tradesmen, of whom the greatest part of the sovereign council is composed, could seldom or never succeed to the most honourable or lucrative employments ; they procured an act to be passed, by which the *ternaire* was changed into a *senaire* : that is to say, six candidates, instead of three, were put in nomination, and drew lots for the charge. The names of these six are put into one bag ; and six tickets, upon one of which the employment in question is written, are put into another. Two persons are appointed, one to each bag, to be the drawers of this *official* lottery ; and the candidate against whose name the ticket marked with the employment, is drawn, obtains the post.

It would be too tedious, and indeed too uninteresting, a detail, to enter into a minute account of the forms and circumstances requisite to be observed in selecting the several candidates to be put in nomination. To give you, however, some general idea of this matter :—Upon a vacancy in the great council, for instance, the six persons who are named for candidates,

must be taken from the citizens of that tribe, to which the person who occasioned the vacancy belonged; and must be nominated by such of the members of the sovereign council, who are of the same tribe. The candidates for the senate are, in some instances, nominated by the sovereign council at large, and in others, by those members only of the sovereign council, who belong to the tribe in which the vacancy happens: but in both instances, the candidates put in nomination must be members of the great council. There is but one case, in which the *senaire* is not practised: for, upon the death of a burgomaster, one of the tribunes succeeds of course to his office.

It should seem, that a variety of evils must necessarily flow from this absurd method of filling up vacant posts in the government; as they are left intirely to the capricious disposal of fortune. In fact, it has not unfrequently happened, that a candidate, whose knowledge and abilities rendered him capable of being serviceable to the state, has never had the good luck to obtain the successful ticket; while fortune has bestowed it upon another by no means qualified



qualified to fulfil the duties of the employment. However, notwithstanding the ill effects that occasionally must result from this casual method of election; the management of public affairs is in general tolerably well conducted; and there are few, if any, instances of civil justice being unwisely administered, or of innocence being sacrificed to superior wealth or power.

But it is not the counsellors of state and the several magistrates, that are alone chosen by lot; even the professors in the university are elected in the same manner. The three candidates, however, (for in this instance the *ternaire* is still in use) must be nominated from among those who have taken their doctor's degrees. Hence nothing is more common than to solicit the being chosen one of the candidates for the professorship of a science, which the party has never made the peculiar object of his studies; if the chair of that particular branch of literature in which he excels is already occupied: for, under these circumstances, the respective unqualified professors change places with each other. Thus (to mention an instance from a family well known to all who are conversant in mathematical

matrical learning) John Bernoulli, the famous mathematical professor in this university, who died in 1748, left two sons, James, and John, (still living) who are justly celebrated for their skill in that science, in which both their father and grandfather so eminently excelled. John, after having been several times an unsuccessful candidate for different professorships, was at length chosen by lot professor of  *rhetoric* ; but upon his father's death, he changed with Mr. Rumpel, to whom fortune, with her usual judgment, had thought proper to assign the chair of mathematics. A similar circumstance happened to his brother Daniel: chance conferred upon him the professorship of  *botany*  and  *anatomy* , which he some years afterwards had an opportunity of happily exchanging for that of natural philosophy.

The sumptuary laws are very strict at Basil: besides those which are common to some other of the Swiss republics; the jealousy of the democratical party has procured additional ones. The use of coaches in the town is not prohibited here, as at Zurich; but, what is more singular, no citizen or inhabitant who keeps his carriage,

is allowed to have a servant behind it. Their laws of this kind may perhaps be carried, in some instances, to a scrupulous and even ridiculous minuteness ; upon the whole, however, they are excellent regulations, and not only useful but necessary in a small republic. They have certainly operated with great advantage in this town : for, although it contains several families who are considerably rich ; yet a happy simplicity of manners is still so predominant, that you would smile if I were to particularise those articles which pass here under the opprobrious denomination of *luxury*. And, notwithstanding, the neighbourhood of France, the French modes and fashions, which are so universally spread among the principal inhabitants of Fribourg and Soleure, are totally unknown at Basil.

The lower rank of citizens are in general so strongly prejudiced in favour of their own country, that they seem to be well convinced true felicity is only to be found at Basil : and indeed that class of people are in no part of the world more happy. Every person boasts that he is free, and in reality is so : and, as the citizens  
not

not only possess very considerable privileges and immunities, but each individual may also indulge the hope of being one day chosen into the sovereign council; he enjoys a certain degree of respect and consideration extremely *flattering* to his self-importance. In fact, there are several among the magistrates who exercise the meaner trades; one of the present members of the little council, is a baker. He is indeed a man of distinguished knowledge and merit; and has had a chance even of being chief of the republic: for, he has been twice nominated one of the six candidates for the tribuneship of the people.

The conduct of magistrates, is no where more freely, nor more severely, criticised than at Basil. The people may sometimes, no doubt, extend this privilege beyond its proper limits; but they can never be totally restrained from exercising it, without striking at the vitals of their liberty: it is essential to its existence, and no free government can long survive its extinction.

Basil is by far the largest, and seems formerly to have been one of the most populous, towns of Switzerland: its extent

is capable of containing with ease, above an hundred thousand inhabitants; whereas it can scarcely number eleven thousand. Many particular causes may have concurred to occasion this remarkable decrease of people; but I will mention only one or two of the general reasons to which it may be assigned.

It is proved, from undoubted calculations, that in all great cities the number of burials exceeds that of births; consequently, unless this unequal proportion of the latter to the former be compensated by a constant accession of new inhabitants, every great town in process of time must necessarily become depopulated. Now the citizens of Basil are so jealous of the right of burghership, and pride themselves so much upon the privileges which accompany it, that they seldom deign to confer it upon foreigners: a supply therefore to ballance that gradual waste of people I have mentioned, can never be had by an influx of strangers, where they are not permitted to carry on any commerce, or to follow any trade. A few years ago, some of the magistrates, sensible of the impolicy of this unlimited prohibition, procured  
a law,

a law, by which the freedom of the town and the right of burghership was allowed to be conferred upon strangers; but it was clogged at the same time with so many restrictions, as by no means to answer the purpose for which it was intended. Every principle, indeed, of private interest and ambition, concurred to prevent its efficacy: and no wonder; for, bodies of men are seldom actuated by so generous a spirit as to sacrifice their personal and immediate advantages, to the future welfare and prosperity of their country.

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XLII.

**C**URIOSITY led me, during my continuance at Basil, to visit the hospital and burying-ground of St. James, not far from the town, and near the small river Birsch, celebrated for a most remarkable and desperate combat, which was fought in 1444, between the Swiss and the dauphin of France, afterwards Louis XI.: and never was Swiss valour and intrepidity so

signally displayed, as by a few battalions of their troops on that memorable day.

This famous battle was in consequence of some disputes, which arose between the canton of Zurich and those of Schweitz and Glaris. The former refusing to abide by the mediation of the five neutral cantons, who had decided in favour of the two latter; a civil war ensued: upon which occasion, Zurich entered into an alliance with the emperor Frederic III. The seven last-mentioned cantons, in order to force the canton of Zurich to renounce this alliance with the house of Austria, which they justly considered as an infringement of their league; laid siege to that town. Frederic, unable to send a sufficient body of troops to its relief, applied for additional succours to Charles VII, king of France; who, as well with a view of dissolving the council of Basil, as for the particular purpose required, ordered a considerable army of mercenary troops to march, under the command of his son Louis. Accordingly the dauphin entered with his forces into Alsace; and, after laying waste and harassing the adjacent provinces, appeared before Basil. Upon this occasion, a detachment  
of

of fifteen hundred Swifs from the army of the confederates (at that time employed in besieging Farnsberg) were ordered to throw themselves into the town of Basil, which was but thinly garrisoned.

This handful of men advanced without interruption to the plain of Brattelen ; where they charged, with such determined and well-conducted valour, eight thousand of the enemy's cavalry, that the latter were driven back as far as Mutleez ; at which place the repulsed were joined by another corps: but, notwithstanding this reinforcement, the Swifs attacking them again with the same intrepidity as before, forced them to repass the river Birsch ; where the main body of the army was chiefly drawn up. Such was the firmness and solidity of the Swifs in these several rencounters, that, to use the expression of an old French chronicle, when the cavalry charged " they " could make no more impression, than if " they had attacked a rock, or an impenetrable wall." The Swifs, encouraged by this wonderful success, and exasperated with the most spirited indignation against the invaders of their country ; disregarding the remonstrances of their officers, rash-



ly attempted to force their passage over a bridge, which was guarded by a large body of the enemy: but this effort of incon- siderate valour proving ineffectual, every man of these gallant soldiers, throwing himself into the river, where it was ford- able, gained the opposite shore, in the face of a battery of cannon that was playing against them.

What could the desperate courage of so small a number of troops avail, against an army of 30,000 men advantageously posted in an open plain? They had no alternative but either to throw down their arms, or gloriously expire with them in their hands: They bravely chose the latter: accordingly five hundred of them took possession of a small island near the bridge, where, after resolutely defending themselves to the last extremity, they were all of them cut to pieces. A like number forced their way through the ranks of the enemy, and were making towards Basil; when they were opposed by a large body of horse, who were posted there to prevent the inhabitants of the town from sallying out to the relief of their countrymen. Being now surrounded on all sides, they threw themselves into the

the hospital of St. James; and, lining the walls of the burying-ground, resisted for some time the united assaults of the whole French army. At length the hospital being set on fire, and the cannon having battered down the walls of the burying-ground; they fought no longer in hopes of victory; but still resolving that it should cost their enemies as dear as possible, they continued to defend their lives to the last gasp.

Æneas Sylvius, (afterwards pope Pius H.) relates, among other actions of singular valour, exerted by this heroic troop, a particular instance which I cannot forbear mentioning. Four of the French attacked a single Swiss, and having killed and stripped him, proceeded to insult the dead body: being observed by a companion of the slain, he seized a battle-ax, rushed upon the four; killed two of them, and put the others to flight; then flinging the dead body of his friend upon his shoulders, carried it to a place of security; and returning to the attack, was killed.

Of the whole number but sixteen escaped from the field of battle: and these, agreeably to the old Spartan discipline, were

branded with infamy, for not having sacrificed their lives in defence of their country. Among those who were desperately wounded, and left upon the field of action, thirty-two only were found still alive. The names of many of these glorious combatants were carefully registered, and still remain upon record.

It is not easy to ascertain the number of forces on both sides in this ever-memorable engagement. As far as one can judge, by comparing the several relations of the French and German historians, the army of the dauphin amounted at least to 30,000. Charles VII. and his son Louis, in their letters to the German princes on this occasion, represent the total loss of the Swifs to have been about 3,000 : and perhaps that account is not much exaggerated. With respect to the slain on the side of the dauphin, the amount is still more uncertain : his loss, however, must have been very considerable, for he remained three days upon the field of battle ; and, the better to conceal the number of the killed, he ordered the dead bodies to be secretly buried in different parts of the neighbourhood. Add to this, that he was effectually prevented

vented from prosecuting his designs upon Switzerland, and compelled to retire with his shattered army into Alsace. That prince himself, indeed, declared, that such another victory would ruin his army; and generously confessed, that he derived no other advantage from it, than to know and esteem the valour of the Swiss. Accordingly, this combat may be considered as forming a remarkable æra in the history of the Swiss: for, it gave rise to their treaty with Charles VII, and was the first alliance they ever entered into with France.

The war, however, between the house of Austria and Zurich on one side, and the seven cantons on the other, continued until the year 1446, when a peace was concluded by the mediation and decision of the arbiters chosen for that purpose: Zurich renounced its alliance with the house of Austria; and the Helvetic confederacy was again solemnly renewed and confirmed between the eight cantons. Upon this occasion, two very important articles of the public law of Switzerland, were finally settled: First, that all disputes between any of the particular cantons, shall be decided by the mediation of the neutral ones; and in case  
either

either of the two contending parties refuse to acquiesce under their judgment, the neutral cantons are empowered to have recourse to arms, in order to compel the republic in question to abide by their determination : Secondly, notwithstanding the right which either of the cantons might have reserved to itself, of contracting alliances with foreign powers, yet the other confederates are to judge, whether such alliance is contradictory to, or incompatible with, the articles of the general union ; and if it should appear to be so, it is declared utterly null and void.

I cannot close this letter without adding, that the Swiss still talk of this famous action with the warmest enthusiasm. Accordingly, the inhabitants of Basil form parties every year, to an inn situated near the hospital and burying-ground above-mentioned, in order to commemorate, in a red wine produced from some vineyards planted on the field of battle, the heroic deeds of their brave countrymen, who so gloriously sacrificed their lives upon the occasion. This wine, which they call "the blood of the Swiss," is highly prized by the Basilians, though it has little to commend

commend it in point of flavour: nevertheless, I am much mistaken if that famous line of Horace,

*Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris.*—

was more applicable to the teasing poet he mentions, than it is to these jovial patriotic parties at these anniversary compositions of the "*Sang des Suisses*."

I am, &c.

### LETTER XLIII.

**H**AVING, in the course of my former letters, communicated to you such observations as I was able to make during my tour through Switzerland, concerning the laws, government, state of literature, &c. of each canton in particular, I will now request from you the same candid indulgence I have so repeatedly experienced, & whilst I lay before you a few concluding remarks, in relation to the state of Switzerland in general.

There is no part of Europe which contains, within the same extent of region, so many independent commonwealths; and such

such a variety of different governments, as are collected together in this remarkable and delightful country ; and yet, with such wisdom was the Helvetic union composed, and so little have the Swiss, of late years, been actuated with the spirit of conquest, that since the firm and complete establishment of their general confederacy, they have scarcely ever had occasion to employ their arms against a foreign enemy ; and have had no hostile commotions among themselves, that were not very soon happily terminated. Perhaps there is not a similar instance in antient or modern history, of a warlike people, divided into little independent republics, closely bordering upon each other, and of course having occasionally interfering interests, having continued, during so long a period, in an almost uninterrupted state of tranquillity. And thus, while the several neighbouring kingdoms have suffered, by turns, all the horrors of internal war, this favoured nation hath enjoyed the felicity described by Lucretius, and looked down with security upon the various tempests that have shaken the world around them.

But

But the happiness of a long peace, has neither broken the spirit, nor enervated the arm of this people. The youth are diligently trained to all the martial exercises, such as running, wrestling, and shooting both with the cross-bow and the musket; a considerable number of well-disciplined Swiss troops are always employed in foreign services; and the whole people are enrolled, and regularly exercised in their respective militia. By these means they are capable, in case it should be necessary, of collecting a very respectable body of forces, which could not fail of proving formidable to any enemy who should invade their country, or attack their liberties. Thus, while most of the other states upon the continent are tending more and more towards a military government, Swisserland alone has no standing armies; and yet, from the nature of its situation, from its particular alliances, and from the policy of its internal government, is more secure from invasion than any other European power, and full as able to withstand the greatest force that can be brought against it.

But the felicity of Swisserland does not  
 3 consist



consist merely in being peculiarly exempted from the burdens and miseries of war ; there is no country in which happiness and content more universally prevail among the people. For, whether the government be aristocratical, democratical, or mixed ; absolute or limited ; a general spirit of liberty pervades and actuates the several constitutions : so that even the oligarchical states (which, of all others, are usually the most tyrannical) are here peculiarly mild ; and the property of the subject is securely guarded against every kind of violation.

But there is one general defect in their criminal jurisprudence, which prevails throughout this country. For, although the Caroline code, as it is styled, or the code of the Emperor Charles the Vth, forms in each of the republics the principal basis of their penal laws, with particular modifications and additions in different districts ; yet much too great a latitude is allowed to the respective judges, who are less governed in their determinations by this code, or any other written law, than by the common principles of justice. How far long experience may have

justified the prudence of trusting them with this extraordinary privilege, I cannot say; but discretionary powers of this kind, are undoubtedly liable to the most alarming abuse, and can never, without the greatest hazard, be committed to the hands of the magistrate.

I cannot forbear reflecting, upon this occasion, on the superior wisdom, in the present instance, as well as in many others, of our own most invaluable constitution; and indeed, it is impossible for an Englishman to observe, in his travels, the governments of other countries, without becoming a warmer and more affectionate admirer of his own. In England, the life and liberty of the subject does not depend upon the arbitrary decision of his judge, but is secured by express laws, from which no magistrate can depart with impunity. This guarded precision, it is true, may occasionally, perhaps, be attended with some inconveniences; but they are overbalanced by advantages of so much greater weight as to be scarcely perceptible in the scales of justice. I do not mean, however, to throw any imputation upon the officers of criminal jurisdiction in Switzerland: as far as  
I could

I could observe, they administer distributive justice with an impartial and equitable hand.

I remarked, with peculiar satisfaction, the excellent state of the prisons throughout this country, and the humane precautions which the several legislatures have taken with respect to felons : a circumstance which could not fail of striking me the more forcibly, as the contrary is but too visible in England. In Switzerland, the criminals are confined in wholesome and separate wards ; and instead of languishing long in prison, to the great injury of their health, or total waste of their little remnant of money ; they are almost immediately brought to trial. In England, a criminal, or one suspected to be such, may be confined six months before his fate shall be determined : and if he happen to be proved innocent, and should be in low circumstances ; the loss of his time, together with the expences of the gaol-fees, may probably occasion his utter ruin ; while his morals are in no less danger, by being compelled to associate with a set of abandoned wretches, lost to all sense of shame, and encouraging each other in their common

common profligacy. How much is it to be lamented, that, while our code of criminal jurisprudence is in general formed upon principles, which distinguish us with honour among the nations of Europe; that our courts of justice are thrown open to the view of all the world; and that we enjoy the inestimable and almost peculiar privilege of being tried by our equals; how much (I cannot forbear repeating) is it to be lamented, that the same equitable and humane spirit should be found wanting in so important an article of our penal laws\*!

One

\* For a more particular account of the prisons in Switzerland, the reader is referr'd to a treatise concerning "*The state of the prisons in England and Wales, and an account of some foreign prisons, by John Howard, Esq, 1777.*" In this treatise (which merits the attention of every friend to humanity) the worthy author has produced many melancholy proofs of the sad state of the English prisons, and how very inferior they are to those abroad in every circumstance relating to the health and good government of the unhappy persons confined in them. And it cannot but afford him the most possible satisfaction to find, that his benevolent and persevering labours have already been productive of some very advantageous regulations, particularly concerning the fees of prisoners who shall be acquitted,

H h

One cannot but be astonished, as well as concerned, to find, that in a country where the true principles of civil government are so well understood and so generally adopted as in Switzerland, that the trial by torture is not yet abolished: for, in some particular cases, the suspected criminal is still put to the rack. The inefficacy, no less than the inhumanity, of endeavouring to extort the truth by the several horrid instruments which too ingenious cruelty has devised for that purpose, has been so often exposed by the ablest writers, that it would be equally impertinent and superfluous to trouble you with any reflections of mine upon the subject: and indeed, the whole strength of the several arguments that have been urged upon this occasion, is comprised in the very just and pointed observation of the admi-

ted, and the prevention of the gaol distemper. As Mr. H. still continues his laudable researches through all the most considerable prisons upon the continent, and intends submitting the result of them to the consideration of Parliament; it may justly be hoped, that he will be rewarded with the happiness of having become the means of effectually fixing the attention of the British Senate upon an object so highly deserving the care of every wise and humane Legislature.

nable Bruyere, that *la question est une invention merveilleuse & tout-à-fait sûre, pour perdre un innocent qui a la complexion faible, & sauver un coupable qui est né robuste* \*. I cannot, however, but add, in justice to the Swiss, that zealous advocates have not been wanting among them for the total abolition of torture: but arguments of reason, and sentiments of humanity, have been found, even in this civilised and enlightened country, to avail little against inveterate custom and long-confirmed prejudices †.

Learning

\* Caracteres, Vol. ii. p. 203.

† Criminal justice is here, as in the greatest part of Europe, administered agreeably to the rules of the civil law. According to the maxims of that code, the criminal's confession is absolutely requisite, in order to his suffering capital punishment; and consequently, all those nations who have not established a new code of criminal jurisprudence, retain the use of torture.

The present king of Prussia, it is well known, set the example in Germany, of abolishing this inhuman practice; but few, perhaps, are apprised, that the first hint of this reformation was suggested to him by reading the History of England. For, one of the principal arguments in support of this method of extorting confession, being that it affords the best means of discovering plots against government; the sagacious monarch remarked, that the British would fully confute the fallacy of that reasoning. Few kingdoms, he observ-

Learning is less generally diffused among the catholic than the protestant states; but in both, a man of letters will find abundant opportunities of gratifying his researches and improving his knowledge. To the natural philosopher, Switzerland will afford an inexhaustible source of entertainment and information, as well from the great variety of physical curiosities so plentifully spread over the country, as from the considerable number of persons eminently skilled in that branch of science. Indeed in every town, and almost in every village, the curious traveller will meet with collections worthy of his attention \*.

With

ed, had abounded more in conspiracies and rebellions than England; and yet that the leaders and abettors of them had been more successfully traced and discovered, without the use of torture, than in any country where it was practised. "From thence," added this wise politician, speaking upon the subject, "I saw the absurdity of torture, and abolished it accordingly." The above anecdote, which I had from very respectable authority, bears the most honourable testimony to the efficacy as well as the mildness of our penal laws, and to the superior excellence of the process observed in our courts of criminal justice.

\* If the reader should be desirous of particular information concerning the several last-mentioned articles;

With respect to agriculture; there is, perhaps, no country in the world where the advantageous effects of unwearied and persevering industry are more remarkably conspicuous. In travelling over the mountainous parts of Swisserland, I was struck with admiration and astonishment, to observe rocks, that were formerly barren, now planted with vines, or abounding in rich pasture; and to mark the traces of the plough along the sides of precipices so steep, that it must be with great difficulty that a horse could even mount them. In a word, the inhabitants seem to have surmounted every obstruction which soil, situation, and climate, had thrown in their way, and to have spread fertility over various spots of the country which nature seemed to have consigned to everlasting

articles; he will find his curiosity gratified in the most satisfactory manner, in Bernoulli's *Lettres sur different sujets*, &c. which contain, not only a very accurate description of all the various cabinets, and collections of natural history, to which I have alluded, but also an account of the several men of letters who have distinguished themselves in Germany, Swisserland, and the south of France. The ingenious author proposes favouring the world with two additional volumes upon the same subjects, relating to Italy.



barrenness. In fine, a general simplicity of manners, an open and unaffected frankness, together with an invincible spirit of freedom, may justly be mentioned in the number of those peculiar qualities which dignify the public character of this people, and distinguish them with honour among the nations of Europe.

I have now laid before you the principal observations which occurred to me in my journey through Swisserland : happy ! if they may in any respect have contributed to your information or amusement. They were originally intended merely as a private memorial of friendship ; but I have an additional satisfaction in the very unexpected opportunity they now afford me of more openly testifying the sincere esteem with which I am,

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate,  
and obliged humble servant,

WILLIAM COXE.

APPENDIX.

## A D V E R T I S E M E N T .

*THE following letters were written merely as a private tribute of friendship, and without the least view of their passing from the hands of the gentleman to whom they are addressed, into any other but those of the Author's most intimate connections. To the latter they were accordingly communicated; and it was solely in compliance with their unanimous, though perhaps too partial, opinion, that he consented to commit them to the press. For that purpose a revision of them became necessary; in the course of which he availed himself of every means in his power, to render them less unworthy of public inspection: and he feels a just pride in acknowledging, that he has received much additional information from several of his literary acquaintance in Swisserland; that by Captain Floyd's obliging communication of the very accurate journal he kept during their joint tour; he has been enabled to insert several material circumstances which had either slipped his memory, or escaped his observation; and that it is owing to the judicious animadversions of some other of his ingenious friends, that these sheets do not appear with all their original imperfections.*

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## A P P E N D I X.

## No. I.

**T**HE following table exhibits at one view the present order of the thirteen cantons, and the æra of their reception into the Helvetic confederacy.

The eight ancient cantons.	{	Zuric	—	—	Reformed religion	—	1350
		Berne	—	—	Reformed	—	1352
		Lucerne	—	—	Catholic	—	1332
		Uri	—	—	Catholic	—	1315
		Schweitz	—	—	Catholic	—	1315
		Underwalden	—	—	Catholic	—	1315
		Zug	—	—	Catholic	—	1352
The five new cantons.	{	Glaris	—	—	Mixed	—	1351
		Basil	—	—	Reformed	—	1501
		Fribourg	—	—	Catholic	—	1481
		Soleure	—	—	Catholic	—	1481
		Schaffhausen	—	—	Reformed	—	1501
		Appenzel	—	—	Mixed	—	1513

The quota of troops to be furnished by each canton in case of war, will appear from the following distribution, which was fixed in 1668, in order to form a confederate army of 9,600 men. The same proportion to be observed, if an augmentation of troops might be thought necessary.

Zuric	—	—	1,400
Berne	—	—	2,000
Lucerne	—	—	1,200
Uri	—	—	400
Schweitz	—	—	600
Underwalden	—	—	400
Zug	—	—	400
Glaris	—	—	400
Basil	—	—	400
Fribourg	—	—	800
Soleure	—	—	600
Schaffhausen	—	—	400
Appenzel	—	—	600
			<hr/>
			9,600

## A P P E N D I X.

## No. II.

Extract from SAXO GRAMMATICUS.

**N**EC silentio implicandum, quod sequitur. Toko quidam aliquamdiu regis (i.e. Haraldi Blaatand) stipendia meritis officiis quibus commilitones superabat complures virtutum suarum hostes effecerat. Hic forte sermone inter convivas temulentius habito tam copioso se sagittandi usu callere jactitabat, ut pomum quantumcunque exiguum baculo e distantia superpositum, primâ spiculi directione feriret. Quæ vox primum obtrectantium auribus excepta regis etiam auditum attigit. Sed mox principis improbitas patris fiduciam ad filii periculum transtulit, dulcissimum vitæ ejus pignus baculi loco statui imperans. Cui nisi promissionis auctor primo sagittæ conatu pomum impositum excussisset, proprio capite inanis jactantiæ pœnas lueret. Urgebat imperium regis militem majora promissis edere, alienæ obtrectationis insidiis parum



